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This traditional arrangement of the Hill Maria villages is far from being always observed. I have seen a village constructed in this way on one of its traditional sites (*pagh* or *pagha'i*; Murias say *pare*, while Bison-horn Marias generally use the Halbi word *padar*), and then four years later found it reconstructed on one of the alternative sites with little sign of the traditional grouping; and I have also seen the converse occur. In fact, the configuration of the site may make the traditional arrangement difficult. It is also being gradually abandoned in the villages on the edges of the hills into which the individualism of surrounding plains villages is creeping, and in the few villages such as Orcha and Hikul which have good permanent rice cultivation; in the latter villages there is a growing tendency not to shift the sites when the surrounding *penda* slopes are exhausted, but to cultivate even remote slopes from the village site in the vicinity of the permanent rice fields. As the old feeling of village community weakens, houses are no longer built as long-houses, each containing groups of three or four houses occupied by brothers or near paternal cousins, but are built detached, each with its own granary close to it, instead of the householder having one compartment in the long granary row; even then, however, the detached houses tend to group themselves roughly into lines flanking a central open space, at one end of which is the village dormitory (*gotul-lon*), in its usual position. Even when a village site is becoming permanent, as at Orcha and Hikul, any sudden calamity, such as crop failure, epidemic or epizootic, will probably induce the villagers to shift. In several villages the *kasyeq-gaita* always keeps a hen sitting on eggs inside his house, and the addling of an undue proportion of these is frequently a signal for the shifting of the village; but a wise *gaita* does not let his eggs get addled unless there is really sound economic or religious reason for shifting, when the omens can be made to suit the occasion.

Behind each line of houses will be found rows of pig-sties, at least one for each house; and the pigs often seem better housed than their masters. Where, as around Orcha, sal (*Shorea robusta*) or other timber is plentiful, the pig-sties are generally made of sections of tree trunk or large boughs laid horizontally between vertical stays, with an opening in front which can be closed by dropping vertical posts over it between horizontal stays at the top and bottom of the opening. These sties are sheltered from the sun by grass-thatched roofs sloping back from two or more vertical posts about 6 feet high to similar posts about 4 feet high in the rear. Dug-out troughs of sal wood are kept outside or just inside the sties for water and food for the pigs; the commonest food is a mash made from the chaff or husks of *kosra* (*kutki*; *Panicum miliaceum*) and

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166 When shifting is to begin, all the parish lands being lands of
361 the clan, the *wadda'i* or priest of the clan-god is usually consulted;
● 787 he is generally himself the *leski* or medium whom the god possesses,
791 and if the god through him directs that the village should be shifted,
778 he leads the villagers to the new site; sometimes the *wadda'i* himself is not a medium, but keeps a *leski* as an assistant. At the new site the *kasyeq-gaita* clears a small patch of ground in honour of the Village Mother, and on this offers an egg, some grain and flowers in her name, over which he places stones in a basketry cylinder or as a cairn. This will remain as her shrine in the new village, sometimes, as we have seen, inside the dormitory fencing, sometimes outside it but in the main village street, or sometimes right outside the village in a grove, a shed being erected over it. The removal of the cairn would be an omen of disaster, only to be avoided by shifting the village. The Orcha villagers had only a small table-stone at the foot of a *saja* tree in a grove to mark their Village Mother. Handawada, besides a cairn, had a forked stick of *saja* wood oiled and polished, and whipped round the fork with *kasa* silk whipping, with a leaning thatched roof to protect her from the elements. Whatever form her shrine or representation may take, it is left behind when the village is deserted, and not shifted to the new village; for it is regarded as valuable evidence of the clan or parish property in the land. The only things removed are the pots in which grain, etc., is cooked at the Mother's feasts, the cooking utensils and the knives, which the *kasyeq-gaita* or [784] religious headman must himself carry under his arm, *not* on his head, which is taboo, to the shed erected to house them near the Mother's shrine in the new village.

361 In the villages which I have seen being shifted, the earliest
166 buildings to be erected have been the village dormitory, the houses of the 'advance guard', the religious and the secular headmen, and the menstruation hut. Villagers often put up their pig-sties before their own houses. A temporary dormitory is often put up to house the bachelors, and replaced after the houses have been built by a more permanent and elaborate structure.

The villagers remove all their utensils and household goods from their old to their new houses when the village is shifted. But they move no building materials; they leave the deserted houses to the mercy of the elements, which means that they are soon choked in the mass of high grass and scrub jungle that immediately springs up on the deserted site, and probably burnt down when the forest undergrowth is fired in the following spring.

[text continues on p. 112]

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that there was no custom of segregating menstruating girls or women.

There is in every Bison-horn village a *paih-gotul* or lodging-hut for State officials, but I have never seen a *gotul-lon* dormitory for bachelors. I was once told that there are such dormitories in a few big villages such as Ghotpal, Karli, Tumnar, Massenar and Dugeli, but could not find one in these villages; nor did the State officials who gathered information for me in various parts of the Bison-horn country ever report their existence. The *padas* (headmen) and *permas* (village priests) whom I saw at Aranpur and other camps stated that such dormitories were a degraded institution found only among Hill Marias and Murias. They are not mentioned by Madras writers on the Koyas and Dorlas.

Bison-horn villages are not found on the tops of hills and isolated spurs like Hill Maria villages. They are located in positions convenient for communications, water supply or cultivation, like lowland villages in all countries. Many of them, especially in the Jagdalpur tahsil, have cart tracks leading to them, though these are used mainly by the Hindu and Mohammedan traders who bring their wares to the various weekly markets already established in their bigger villages. Though, however, some Bison-horn Marias have carts, and more keep cattle and do not always leave it to the Rawat herdsman servant to milk them, while many use ploughs, yet the majority of them still think it not the thing for Koitor to drive carts, or that they could never manage them; and there are, therefore, very many villages approachable only by footpaths. They make bridges very similar to those of the Hill Marias, often on a more elaborate scale.

Shifting villages

The only Bison-horn Maria village where I could find memory of a fairly recent shifting was Bare Gudra, in the Kuakonda *pargana* of Dantewara tahsil. My informant was Kartami Mukka, the old village priest (*perma*) of the village, who said that when he was young the village was settled in the now abandoned Mundi *padar* (village site); there was heavy mortality from epidemic and epizootic outbreaks for some years, and a series of crop failures. Then the eggs in his father's house began always to get addled, and his father, the *perma*, interpreting this as a final intimation that the village had to be shifted, called up the elders to see the eggs, and they agreed that the village must be shifted. They had then, on a Monday, Wednesday or Friday, to go at noon with the *perma* to select the *padar* for the new village; and to test the omens at the new *padar* the *perma* dug a small hole in the ground. In the first hole he found a root growing across the hole, and so changed to another position

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in the same *padar*, and here he was able to dig a hole without any root growing across it; a few roots at the side of the hole did not matter, and the finding of a stone when the hole was half dug was considered lucky. In this hole he planted a pole of *saja* wood with a forked top, to one arm of which he had tied a bundle of thatching grass, and after filling in the hole around it with earth he sprinkled some grains of rice in two heaps in front of the pole in the name of the Village Mother, the clan-god and the local spirits. The next morning he came with the elders to inspect the two heaps of grain, and as he found them scattered about, he had to dig a fresh hole exactly as before, plant the *saja* pole in it, and lay two heaps of grain again in front of it. Next morning they found the two heaps undisturbed, and so considered that the omens favoured this as the village site. The *saja* pole was left there to serve as one of the supports for the roof-tree of the *perma's* house, and the building of the new village was begun without further ceremony. Had the heaps of grain been found again disturbed, they would have decided against that *padar* and tested the omens in the same way in another *padar*. A sacrifice to the Village Mother and the Earth (*Bhum*) had preceded the actual settling in the new site.

Houses

On page 121 are a rough sketch and ground-plan of a typical Bison-horn Maria house in the village of Telam in Kuakonda *pargana*. The inner house, consisting of the *wijja-lon* ('seed-house') in the rear, and the *narma-lon* ('middle house') in front of it, is made first; and then the *oser* ('veranda') is added, with slightly lower eaves. Though from indoors the *oser* seems just an integral part of the house, the different levels of the eaves make the house look from the outside like two card houses built on different levels. Sometimes also a second or even a third *oser* has subsequently been built on to the first, each with lower eaves, increasing still further the card house appearance. The thatch is of forest grasses or of the dwarf palms (*Phoenix sylvestris* and *Phoenix farinifera*) which are such common features of the undergrowth of the Bastar forests, and is neater than the thatch of Hill Maria houses. The doors are usually pieces of bamboo wicker-work sliding between pairs of vertical posts, like the doors of the Hill Maria houses; but sometimes the sections of wicker-work are hinged on to a doorpost by knotted pieces of split bamboo. In the richer and more advanced villages, wooden doors and padlocks are not unknown.

The *wijja-lon*, like the Hill Maria's *lonu*, is used both as a store-room and for the cult of the Departed. There being no pile granaries or long granaries, the year's harvest, not only of grain but also of forest produce, is stored in the *wijja-lon*, and so a storage platform

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and many a marriage arises from the first meeting of lad and girl in these dances.

The land, as has been seen, is the land of the clan-god (if not even, in some sense, the clan-god himself). It is natural, therefore, that before any of these festivals are held in the individual villages of the clan the main ceremony for the whole clan should take place before the clan-god, either in or near the parish where his permanent hut-temple is situated. When the new grain of the crop concerned has been garnered, the *kasyeq-gaita* of each village sends word to the *pen-waddai* or clan-priest. The clan-priest consults the clan-god personally if himself a medium, or else through a medium, and announces a date for the celebration before the clan-god. On the night before leaving their village to attend the celebration, the *kasyeq-gaita* and all the men who are to go with him next day observe sexual continence, and sleep in the dormitory. The *kasyeq-gaita* is fed that night on fish, at the expense of the village, in some clan-areas. In a few villages a separate *bhum-gaita* exists, whose sole function seems to be to lead the villagers in visits of this kind to the clan-god. Before dawn, each wife grinds about 4 lb. of the new grain for her husband to take to the clan-festival. No women may attend the new-eating ceremonies. Besides supplies of new grain, the *kasyeq-gaita* and men take on behalf of the whole village a cock or two (there is no rule as to the colour of the victim), and perhaps, when the village is large or prosperous, a young boar (*not* a gelded pig) or a barren sow.

The deputations from the various villages assemble at the *pen-rawar* or shrine of the clan-god. The god, which in form is always a framework of logs criss-crossed with bamboos and bedecked with peacock feathers, spirals of quills, brass bells and other simple finery, is then taken out of his hut by four men of the clan-priest's family or village, and borne to the traditional place of sacrifice, which may be near the shrine or even outside the main village of the clan, three or four miles from the shrine. There they set the god down on stones under a *seja* tree, and the four bearers have a ceremonial wash. Sometimes the clan-priest again, either himself if a medium, or through mediums, consults the wishes of the god, who always permits the festival to continue, but generally suggests that they should first offer worship to the Village Mother of the village where the assembly has gathered. All adjourn to her shrine, and there the *kasyeq-gaita* of the village places a grain or two of the new crop on the table-stone or cleft stick representing the Mother, cuts the throat of a small chicken, sprinkles its blood on the Mother, and throws it down, still alive, on the ground. All watch the chicken eagerly; if after a convulsive leap or two it falls dead on its back with its claws in the air, it is an excellent omen.

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off, and eat them raw. The men gather the edible bean-pods of the *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper when cutting its stems for rope fibre and gathering its leaves for plates, rain hats and shields, but generally light a fire then and there in the forest and roast the beans in the pods, when it is easy to extract them to eat.

B. Hunting and Trapping

The Hill Maria is as omnivorous as all Gonds, and it is difficult to discover what he will not eat if he can get it. But there is little game left in the Abujhmar hills, except where the hills descend to the Indrawati, Gudra and Kotri valleys. The *shikaris par excellence* of Bastar are the Murias of the northern plateaux and the Bison-horn Marias of the *parganas* around Barsur and the Indrawati valley, where there is still fairly plentiful game. The Hill Maria is therefore not an expert beater, though twenty-four hours spent by any would-be sportsman in Kutru territory in training Hill Marias to beat will be amply rewarded, not only by the quick way in which they learn, even if taught only by pantomime, but by the fun and humour with which they will take their lesson. They have memories of hunting tiger, panther, bison, buffalo, deer of all kinds, and even, very shadowy, of rhinoceros.[1] But the appearance in the hills of one or two tiger after the 1931 census for the first time within human memory was interpreted as a sign of divine displeasure, and all the census house numbers painted by the enumerators on little squares of wood prepared *ad hoc* by the Marias and preserved in many houses for each census from 1911 onwards were collected together and burnt on the village boundaries to placate the Departed. Outside Tondawada village a panther was shot by the village lads with arrows thirty years or more ago; three small stone menhirs about twenty inches high were driven then into the ground at the spots where its head, the root and the tip of its tail had lain when it fell dead; the feat is still spoken of as a deed of prowess. Orcha is the only Hill Maria village, so far as I am aware, that follows the practice of the spring hunt before sowing the crops, which is so marked and important a feature of tribal life among the Bison-horn Marias, the Parjas and Bhattras; but the Orcha people seem to have copied the hunt from the Bison-horn Marias without its religious significance; there is no sprinkling of blood on the first seeds sown, no ceremony before and after the hunt, women take no part in the proceedings to drive unwilling men out to the hunt, and no portion of the slain quarry is offered to the clan-god, the

Hill Marias

[1] Compare *Gazetteer*, p. 32. The rhinoceros tradition still existed in 1938.

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nostrums like the use of red-ants for fever or python-flesh for pot-belly already mentioned, and cauterization is the only treatment he knows for simple injuries or foot-crack (just as he brands the flanks of ailing cattle). A Maria bitten by a rabid dog at His Excellency Sir Montagu Butler's Christmas camp at Kondagaon in 1927 refused point blank to be sent out of Bastar to Raipur for Pasteur treatment, but ultimately as a concession to the general anxiety asked to be given the body of the dog, and ate its liver.[1] To Marias illness is generally a manifestation of something malignant, either the magic of a human enemy or the ill-will of a god or spirit. At funerals, steps are taken to ascertain whether magic was the cause of death; in illness a medium is called in, or a *wade* or *gunia* with knowledge either of spells to defeat the spirits of evil or of the white magic means of blowing away illness, *jhara phukna*; epidemic or epizootic disease may be defeated either by palisading the village after sweeping it clean, and posting guards with bows and arrows to shoot the demons of illness, as was done by Hill Marias in the great influenza epidemic of 1918, or by special disease-riddance ceremonies like the annual ceremony described on page 140. Yet such is the Hindu's faith in their 'medicine' that in 1930 the late zamindar of Sukma hastened his death when in the last stages of diabetes by taking the advice of Bison-horn Maria 'doctors' or *gunia* to the effect that he had two intestines, one of which had withered like a dead plant, while the other, though withering, was still partly green and could be revived if the patient fed it with lumps of black earth.

Maria treatment of disease

B. Manufactures

In the preceding chapters frequent mention has been made of basketry, for Maria measures, grain bins, walls of houses and fences, dancing shields and so on. The Hill Marias are great basket workers, men and women. The men make all the big basketry bins for storing grain and the large baskets sold at the markets, as well as dancing shields and fencing and matting; the women make the basketry measures, basketry plates and the smaller domestic baskets, as well as brooms of various grasses, which are generally plaited together at the top by basketry methods. In camps, Hill Maria youths almost invariably employ any spare time in basket-making. Bison-horn Marias on the contrary leave it almost entirely to their women, except that the men make the basketry caps that are the basis of the *tallagulla* bison-horn dancing headdress, and fencing.

1. Basketry

1 [See cat. 116, p. 421. - Awalgaf]

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other villages. Though this is called the 'remains-eating' feast, yet actually fresh meat is killed and cooked, because women and girls, who are not allowed to attend the sacrifices, are equally debarred from eating any part of the sacrificial victims. The day ends in *landa* drinking and dancing. In these first-fruits *pandum* dances the bison-horn head-dresses used not to be worn, and in the dance following the *pandum* for new *mahua* and new mangoes men and women dancers dance together, and not separately as in all other Bison-horn Maria dances.

We come now to the great vernal sowing festival with its attendant dancing and hunting that takes place on or near the full moon day of Chait (March-April), and corresponds to the Chait-rai festival of the Bhattras, Parjas and Murias. It starts on a Sunday, five or six days after the *Marka Pandum*. *Landa* is brewed in profusion in every house for days in advance, and as much *mahua* liquor procured from the excise shops as household funds and the excise rules permit. Sexual continence is, as in all these ceremonies, the rule for the night before the festival begins, and in some villages is ensured by all the men sleeping together that night and until the last ceremony is over, generally in the *kadri-bera* field or at the place from which the ritual *weta* hunt sets off.

The Wijja Pandum, Wijja Weta and Jur Weta

The *perma* fasts next morning, and after the men of the village have had their morning meal goes at about noon to the *mahua* tree in the *kadri-bera* or *wijj-erhu* (see pp. 205-6) field, with a supply of rice and an egg, and the men accompany him. He cuts a small bough off the tree, to which in some villages he first sacrifices a black cock. He clears and plasters with cow-dung and water the usual small rectangle of ground, and in the centre makes a hole in which he plants the *mahua* bough and a plant of *dab* (*Pollinea argentea*) grass. In front of this he sprinkles rice and egg-shells, in which he sets an egg upright on its end in the name of the Village Mother, or of Bhu-deo and Bhu-devi. He then takes up a *datun* or tooth-cleaning twig of *mahua*, splits it longitudinally in his teeth, and throws the split pieces three times on the ground. For the pieces to fall one on the other like a saltire each time is the best of omens for the coming hunt and the ensuing harvest; for them to fall apart is a bad omen. Sometimes this consultation of the omens does not take place in the *kadri-bera* field, but in the forest at the place from which the ritual hunt is to start; there sometimes a rough altar of bows and arrows, as in the illustration opposite, is made, and the *perma*, facing the east, places on the ground before the altar three heaps of mixed bran and egg-shells in the name of each of the three Ban Kunwarin or Forest-maidens, and on each

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to the shed where the animals killed in the second ritual hunt were kept and cut up, and there they are cooked along with the head, intestines and lower legs of those animals, and eaten by the men of the village.

This should be followed on the next Sunday by the *Jur-weta* for the whole *pargana* at the chief village of the *pargana*, the *perma* of that village acting as the officiant before the altar of bows and arrows erected in the name of the Forest-maidens, and the *perma* and elders of each village offering an egg and a tooth-stick to be placed by the officiating *perma* in the bran-heap of each of the three Forest-maidens. The *weta* is sometimes followed by worship of the clan-god and the *Pen-karsita* festival, except in villages where that takes place at the Mandai or Deogudi Jatra on or about the full moon day of Magh. It has already been said that the *Jur-weta* is now abandoned in most *parganas* because nearly all except small game has been exterminated. Actually, however, the photograph illustrating the sacrifice to the Forest-maidens, facing page 211, was taken at a *Jur-weta* and not at the *wijja-weta* of the preceding week.

It remains to state what each man does with the packet of consecrated seed which he takes back from the Wijja Pandum to his house. Before seed-time, he calls in a medium (*wadde*), through whom he consults the oracle as to the propitious day and hour for the field sowing ceremony. At the appointed time, taking care to be overlooked by no one, he takes to his field a sowing basket containing the consecrated seed mixed with other seed, a little cooked rice and a cock. In the field he clears a little plot of ground, spreads rice on it and, as soon as the cock starts to eat it, cuts its head off from the throat upwards in the name of the Earth-god, and sprinkles its blood on the ground and on the seed in the basket. He prepares a small piece of the field for sowing, and on it sows three handfuls of the blood-sprinkled seed. He then cooks and eats the body of the cock in the field, leaving the head there, and makes his way back to his house, still trying to avoid being seen. After this ceremony he is free to complete his sowing when he likes.

Hareli

Hareli is not observed by all Bison-horn Marias, but is universal among Parjas and Bhattras and the Jagdalpur Murias, and, under its common local name of Amavas, amongst Halbas and other Hindus of the State. The Dantewara and Barsur temples have spread its observance among the Bison-horn villages of Jagdalpur and Dantewara tahsils, and the villagers generally wait till the temples have celebrated the festival before celebrating it in their villages. On the morning of the day on which they have decided to hold it, the village elders assemble at the

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753 is that it is caused by magic and best cured by detection of the magician, or by white counter-magic.

761 Black magic is still suspected as the cause of death by all
754 Marias. Bison-horn Marias consider it proved if, when they return next day to the pyre where they left a corpse burning, they find part of the body unburnt. Hill Marias, through a *waddai* clan-priest
[787] or his medium assistant, call on the corpse to impel its bearers to one of seven leaves that represent the possible causes of death; three of these leaves represent the magic of a fellow-villager, the magic of a *waddai* or medium, and the magic of a man at enmity with the deceased owing to a quarrel. All log-gods, whether Maria clan-gods or the various Anga-deo and Pat-deo of the Halbas and Murias, have the power of detecting witchcraft, either by impelling their bearers to the offender (the usual way among non-Marias) or through their oracles the *waddai* (or *wedde* or *wadde*). In previous chapters we have seen witchcraft regarded as the cause of the blacksmith's iron ore[1] failing to produce good iron when smelted, and of the spoiling of the flowering peduncles of the *salphi* tree[2] by worms and grubs. In fact, again to quote Glasfurd[3]:—

> 'The people invariably impute their misfortunes to witchcraft. If a man's bullock dies, it is caused by witchcraft; if his crops fail, it is because the land has been bewitched by someone who is at enmity with the owner; a lingering sickness or painful disease is laid at the door of an enemy, and, in short, from the most common affairs of everyday life to the most serious, every evil that befalls a family is imputed to witchcraft.'

674 Suspected witchcraft was the cause of eight out of the eighteen
754 murders committed between 1917 and 1923 by Bison-horn Marias and of the two murders committed by Hill Marias; it was the
683 alleged cause in the one Hill Maria and six of the eleven Bison-horn Maria murder cases which I tried between 1927 and 1931 as *ex-officio* Sessions Judge. Glasfurd[3] went on to give details of the cruel treatment meted out in his day to persons suspected of witchcraft; the final test applied to a suspect, even if the preliminary test had been in his favour, was to sew him up in a sack, and duck him in waist-deep water, adjudging him guilty if in his struggles for life he managed to raise himself above the water; he was then beaten by the crowd, his head shaved, and his front teeth knocked out with a stone, to prevent him muttering his incantations. He was pelted with all kinds of filth, made to eat degrading food, and driven out of the country. But, with one exception, in none of the many murder and assault cases arising out of suspected witchcraft which occurred while I was in Bastar and of the previous cases of which I have notes was any action taken by Maria village communities

[1] See p. 176. [2] See p. 168. [3] Report, pp. 52-4.

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755 F187 even Hindu officials educated at colleges outside the State place great trust. The cause of the illness or affliction is discovered by some form of divination (*kal hudatore*), generally by means of rice-grains, unless the case is serious enough to necessitate the actual presence of the log-god. The *waddai* always waits till he is possessed by his god (' the god comes upon him ' or ' sits on him ') to give his decision and advice. He gets rid of illness by ' *jhara phukna* ', blowing it away; as the sun is setting and again as it is rising he, to the accompaniment of long spells (*guni*), pretends to B24 charm a patient's illness by brushing it with a spray of leaves of *amaltas* (*Cassia fistula*), a tree with various magic uses, down from the head or the affected part to the toes, where he blows it away. The spells consist mainly of long lists of godlings; here are three specimens acquired from Telami Dhurwa, a *waddai* of Dhurli in Dantewara tahsil :—

(*a*) ' *Haranjuvo, Jurjapo, Panduvo-Parokhanda, Kosurabir, Bhumandra, Modarabir, Kosrapitho, Lonkjugo, Pa'inpaye, Hurrumara, Ligoni, Munsputali, Munj-huvo, Wirsputali, Bhimaraj, Karanja-putali, Karwaraj, Rupkhanda, Jangabela, Mudara, Yerhama, Akalkuvo, Mandkola, Wormar, Yekanath, Nai-taras, Mor-khanda, Nstur-khanda, Gurrakom, Gópanath, Gurja ! Widse him.*'

This is just a catalogue of names said to be of godlings, but almost all of them unknown even to Telami Dhurwa, and ending with the adjuration ' *Widse him* ' or ' Let it go ! ', after saying which the *waddai* lets out a puff of breath from his mouth.

(*b*) ' *Dhanbenu, Arra-barra, Thakur Deo, Unasha'i, Chhewatin, Dhobin, Chandarin, Bhandarin ! Hat ke bandh* (close the hands), *tónd ke bandh* (close the mouth), *kan ke bandh* (close the ears) ! *Guru, bandh !* (Close, oh Guru) *Gwta, Tolisar ! Rukh-cho rukh-jat, ban-cho ban-jat, dongur-cho dongur jat !* (literally, " Of trees, tree-kind, of forest forest-kind, of ant-hill ant-hill-kind ! ") *Kud-mon bhed-mon ilis* (You came by enmity) *Pongon mon ilis* (You came by witchcraft), *par bahare udun-ja* (but get out !).'

This is a Halbi formula, starting with names of godlings, telling them to close the hands, mouth and ears of the illness, and then ordering the illnesses of tree, forests and ant-hill to get out, whether they came through enmity or witchcraft.

(*c*) ' *Chinoni, Bisrama, Boyoni, Polago, Nangago, Idulo, Tulwala, Kowalnago, Irpadmo, Wano-Poriya, Koyondo-Hunga, Ar-Iriya, Podemala, Ar-bunga, Deo-nanda, Hurbura, Nur-Guru, Path-guru, Path-chola, Gurujan !* '

This is a meaningless jingle of words, mostly names of godlings or demons (*rau*).

000 I have not attempted here to speak of the various magico-religious ceremonies, for their magical aspect is commented on when the ceremonies themselves are described under agriculture, religion or other subjects.

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C. *Omens*

We have seen how the addling of the eggs of the *kasyeq-gaita's* hens may lead to the abandonment of a village site[1]; how the siting of a new Bison-horn village is affected by the finding of roots or stones when the *perma* digs a hole for the first *saja* post, and how even when these omens have allowed the hole to be dug, they have further to be confirmed by the villagers waiting till the next day to see whether two heaps of rice have been disturbed[2]; and how before the ceremonial *weta* hunts of the Bison-horn Marias begin, the *perma* consults the omens with two split pieces of a tooth-stick.[3] The Bison-horn Maria often calls in the *waddai* to examine the omens and fix auspicious days for sowing or other occasions. Omens are particularly important in connexion with betrothals and weddings, but among Bison-horn Marias only; the Hill Marias, except those living in contact with the Bison-horn Marias, seem not to worry over them, and in fact to be ignorant of the whole practice. But the Bison-horn Maria likes everything done on an auspicious day, and then only if no adverse omen is met. Russell and Hiralal (III, p. 78) write:—

> 'In Bastar an omen is taken before the wedding. The village elders meet on an auspicious day as Monday, Thursday or Friday, and after midnight they cook and eat food, and go out into the forest. They look for a small black bird called Usi, from which omens are commonly taken. When anybody sees this bird, if it cries "*Sus, Sus*" on the right hand, it is thought that the marriage will be lucky. If, however, it cries "*Chi, Chi*", or "*Fis, Fis*", the proposed match is held to be of evil omen, and is cancelled. The Koya Gonds of Bastar distil mahua liquor before arranging for a match. If the liquor is good, they think the marriage will be lucky, and take the liquor with them to cement the betrothal; but if it is bad they think the marriage will be unlucky, and the proposal is dropped.'

The *usi* bird is a common source of omens; the Marias of the Kutru zamindari below the Abujhmar hills, who are really Hill Marias influenced greatly by contact with Bison-horn Marias and Teluguised Dorlas, when they select a new *modul wadde* as clan-priest and social arbiter, consult the omens before confirming their selection; they go to the forest, and if they hear an *usi* twittering on their left as they go and on their right as they return, consider that the omens favour their selection, but make a fresh selection if the bird twitters on the other sides. Among Bison-horn Marias the *usi* is not the usual source of marriage omens; if the party on its way to ask for a girl's hand in marriage meets a tiger, panther, sambhur, chital, jackal or snake crossing their path from left to right, it is a good omen; if it crosses the path from right to left, the omen is bad, but merely shows that the expedition has started on a bad day and must

[1] See p. 103. [2] See pp. 122-3. [3] See p. 211.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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be postponed for a week or two, not that the proposed match should be dropped.

D. *Beliefs about Natural Phenomena*

To the Hill Maria the universe is *Bhum*, the sky being *Pogho-bhum*, and the earth *Adi-bhum*; they have no name for any underworld or home of the Departed. They sometimes say that they have heard of a god named Ispural living in *Pogho-bhum*, but that they do not worship him. To Hill and Bison-horn Maria the sun (*porad*) is a Koitor, the moon (*lenj*) his woman, and the stars (*hukom* or *minkos*, Hill Maria; *uk'ka*, Bison-horn Maria) are their children; falling stars (*Sohra*, Hill Maria) are their excrement; the Bison-horn Marias consider that falling stars are a portent of death. Both Hill and Bison-horn Marias call the Milky Way the Road (*daghar*, Hill Maria; *marg*, Bison-horn), but they do not know who or what uses the road and have no legend about it, though the Bhattras and Murias of Jagdalpur say that it is the road over which Bhimul drives his bullock-cart, the thunder being the rumbling of the wheels. The only constellations for which I could get Hill Maria names were *Nagar* or Plough for Orion and *Khatoli* or Cot for the Great Bear; enquiries on this point among the Bison-horn Marias drew blank. Neither had any theory about the markings on the moon's face; the Hill Marias have observed that they sometimes look like a human face. The Hill Marias call the rainbow the Earth-serpent (*Bhum-taras*, or *Bhum-taras-korta*), and say that it crawls out of a great ant-hill and throws its light across the sky as a sign of no more rain: the Bison-horn Marias call it *Bhimul-wil*, the bow of Bhimul the rain-god. The Hill Marias associate clouds (*mayyal*) with rain (*pegh*), but do not know where the rain comes from. Thunder (*gadar*) and lightning (*orr*) just happen, and do not alarm them, nor do they appear to have any special precautions to take in burying a man killed by lightning, unlike the Bison-horn Maria. But hail (*adur*) terrifies them, and all rush into their houses. They have no explanation of eclipses, which they call *garhar*, an obvious corruption of the Hindi *grahan*; but the idiomatic way of saying 'there is an eclipse' is '*garhar lopinta*', literally 'the eclipse is swallowing'; and both they and Bison-horn Marias call a man with a hare-lip '*garhar-kandya*', an expression which they themselves cannot explain and is borrowed direct from their Hindu neighbours, who always attribute a hare-lip to an eclipse during the mother's pregnancy.

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836 II. His sister married Gecha Harma of Udala Tondawada, and at the wedding he met Harma's sister Gecha Kowe, and danced with her. They liked each other, and met at other weddings and at koqsar dances, and had sexual intercourse two or three times, which Moda said was necessary in order to ascertain that they were both physically capable. Everyone saw that they were in love, and their wedding followed as soon as the necessary betrothal ceremonies could be completed. But if pre-marital intercourse results in pregnancy, there can be no formal marriage, which the Hill Marias call *marmi* and the Bison-horn *pendul*; the girl states the name of the man responsible, and goes to live in his house without any ceremony, the union being described as *ottur* ('taken away'). A child born to a girl without even *ottur* would be considered as belonging to the clan of the man whom the mother names as the father; and this putative father would be expected to take the mother and child to his house, the union being known to the Hill Marias as *ahene-hattu* ('thus-went'). No stigma attaches to such unions, and the children have exactly the same position and rights as the children of a formal marriage.

588 848

584 Hill Maria parents do not try to interfere in their children's choice of wives and husbands. When a youth and his girl know their minds, each tells his or her parents. Then the youth's parents, with the elders of the village, go, without the youth, with about a rupee's worth of *mahua* spirit (or five bottles) to the girl's parents, taking care to arrive at their house at about four or five o'clock in the afternoon. The father of the youth opens the door of the girl's house, places the liquor bottles inside the threshold and rejoins his party, all of whom sit silent outside the door. The girl's parents then call in some of the elders of their village, and in their presence tell the girl that this liquor has been brought on her account, and ask her if she is willing to go and live with the youth in the village from which the liquor has come. If the girl agrees, the liquor is at once drunk by the parties from the two villages, and the girl's parents entertain the visiting party to supper; if she refuses, the youth's parents take the liquor back to their village. This ceremony is called *talq-da'ina* ('going to ask'). It may take place on any day of the year, Hill Marias recking nothing of auspicious days or omens.

Hill Maria regular betrothal and marriage

● [787]

There is a second *talq-da'ina*, generally after an interval of about a year; it sometimes takes place sooner, but it is considered bad form to be too importunate. The youth does not go with his parents even this time; he does not, indeed, meet his betrothed between the first *talq-da'ina* and marriage, as, once a girl's hand

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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584 contract; they therefore attach less importance to the consent of the girl, and even if a father or his son agree to the *gudapal* girl marrying some other husband, the latter has to compensate the *gudapal* cousin. If a girl's father raises objections to the proposed match, whether a *gudapal* match or not, bitter quarrels often follow; but generally the boy and girl have learnt their own minds before this first formal demand for the girl (*talpana* in the Bison-horn dialect), or there has been previous informal discussion between the two families. Normally, therefore, the youth and girl both being mature, the girl's father gladly agrees to give his girl, and then the youth's father gives him the *paili* of rice and the large and the small pots of *mahua* liquor. The girl's father takes the small pot into [769] the *narma-lon* room of his house, and pours a small quantity on the ground in front of the Pot of the Departed as a libation, the rest being drunk by him and the members of his family. The liquor in the large pot is divided among the relatives and friends of both families who have come to witness the *talpana*, and all disperse except the youth's father and his companions; the rice which he has brought is cooked and served to them and the girl's family. Her father then invites the youth's father to come again for the formal declaration of the betrothal to all his relatives and friends from near and far. The visitors then return to their village.

Some time later the father of the youth in consultation with [797] his friends, and often with the aid of a medium, fixes a day for this second visit, and sends word to the girl's father in good time for him to invite all his relatives and friends. This time he and his party take with them a small pig, two *paili* of rice, a very large pot of *landa* and a large and a small pot of *mahua* spirit. On arrival at the girl's house they are greeted by her father and the assembled guests, and the former announces the betrothal to the company and asks for their formal approval. This given, the girl's father as [769] before pours a libation to the Departed from the small pot of *mahua*, and he and his household drink the rest of its contents. The large pots of *landa* and *mahua* spirit are consumed by all the assembled guests, *barbatti* beans being fried by the girl's mother and served along with the *landa*; and the rice and pork are cooked and served to all present. All then go.

Yet a third preliminary visit to the girl's father follows, the date being arranged as before by the youth's father, and word being sent to the girl's father. This time the former and his party take and deliver to the latter two large pots of *landa*, two large and one small pots of *mahua* spirit, five *paili* of rice or *kutki*, and a large pig. The youth's father tells the girl's father that he intends to

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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763 for some time with a series of one long followed by two short beats to announce that a death has occurred in the house; he then climbs down, and continues this drumming on the ground until the relatives and friends of the dead man assemble, or until the body is taken out to be cremated. Sometimes they fire guns at intervals for the same purpose. Messengers are sent out to neighbouring villages to bid relatives to the funeral.

764 When all the men and women have assembled the body is taken out of the house and washed with a pot of water and anointed with a mixture of ground turmeric and oil. They then spread a cloth on a bier of bamboo wicker-work, lay the body on it, and spread a cloth over it. Each male relative who can afford it brings a cloth and similarly spreads it over the body. Four men then carry the bier on their shoulders to the cremation ground, followed by all the [533] mourners, and men beating the dactylic funeral drum-beat. The pyre is made there, the body laid on it with head to the east and feet to the west, and covered over with fuel. Two men, generally two sons, or two sons-in-law, or a son and a son-in-law, then kindle the pyre at the head and the feet of the body respectively. As soon as the pyre is blazing fiercely the company leaves the cremation ground and returns to the dead man's house for food. The cremation ground is almost always on the side of the path or road opposite to the row of menhirs erected to commemorate the dead, which is known to the Bison-horn Marias as *uraskal*.

• [781 On the next day all go to the cremation ground to see whether the body has been completely reduced to ashes; if any portion 761] remains unburnt, it is a sign that the death was due to the magic of some enemy. All condole with the members of the bereaved family and return to their houses.

On the next Saturday morning comes the erection of the *uraskal* menhir. There are *uraskal* with great numbers of menhirs almost everywhere in the Bison-horn country, and in most parts villagers continue to erect them for men, women and children whenever a death occurs.[4] On the Jagdalpur side, however, and [778] around Paknar, though every village has its *uraskal*, new menhirs are seldom set up in these days, the reason given being always that the ceremony is too expensive. It is indeed expensive, for if properly done it involves the killing of at least one, and possibly two cows, a pig or two, and the provision of three or four *khandi* of grain—*kutki*, *urad*, *mung* and rice—and an adequate supply of 764 *mahua* spirit and *landa*. But expense is not taken into account at 177 weddings, where open house is kept for a thousand guests if need be. 554 The real reason is that these Bison-horn Marias are in close contact with Hinduism with its veneration of the cow; and as they raise

[4] [See cat. 116, p. 426. — Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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Hinduization weakens the taboo on the menstruating and strengthens that on the pregnant woman. It was at Gudra, which stands on a motor-road, that I heard most about restrictions during pregnancy. The pregnant woman in that village was not allowed to cross a stream or the rope with which a horse was tethered; she could not pick or reap any growing thing; if she plastered a wall, she must leave a small hole somewhere. She must not eat the head or legs of a sacrificed animal.[1] Eclipses are dangerous; if a woman goes out of doors at such a time there is danger that her child may be born with a hare-lip or a squint. It is sometimes held that a pregnant woman should not go to the forest clearings; at Barem the daughter of Barse Chule did so; she met a Rau in a whirlwind and was prematurely delivered of a stillborn child.

The cravings of pregnancy are believed, as elsewhere in India, to be due to the erratic and uncertain desires of the child in the womb, but whereas there is usually a belief that it is essential to gratify these cravings I found some Bison-horn Marias of opinion that to do so was dangerous. 'If she eats earth, she will die; if she craves for fish and gets it, she will die.' But at Gudra they took the conventional view and held it was more dangerous to deny the cravings than to fulfil them. Long ago, I was told, a woman wanted a plantain and could not get it; the child was born with a plantain in its hand. Another woman demanded buttermilk and when her request was denied, her hands and feet swelled.

Birth normally occurs on the fenced-in veranda of a Bison-horn Maria house, in the place where the menstruating woman has to sleep. Any variation from the normal is considered dangerous; a foot-presentation, for example, is expected to prove fatal to both child and mother. For the cord to be discovered round the shoulder is a good omen and prophesies wealth; but a strangulating cord suggests that the child will be hanged and a cord round the leg is also bad. The cord is cut with an arrow-head if the child is a boy, with a knife or sickle if it is a girl. The mother herself or some old woman of the household makes a ligature and severs the cord below it. Meanwhile the husband erects in the compound a small 'bathing-hut', a simple unroofed structure of leafy branches, inside which he digs a pit. Then the mother herself, or her attendant, puts the placenta and cord on a leaf-platter of *bauhinia vahlii* leaves[2] and places it in the pit. The father fills the pit with earth and places three green logs and sometimes a large stone or wooden

[1] I have been told that no woman should at any time eat part of an animal sacrificed to Bhimul or Dongar Pen.

[2] This platter, which is chosen at random from a pile, is carefully examined, for the number of children the mother may expect is estimated from the number of bamboo stitches holding it together.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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844 seat above it. Near by he drives the arrow or knife into the ground. He brings a pot of water and puts it inside the hut ; should the water [787] decrease of its own accord it is regarded as a very bad omen and the child is expected to die. This hut is now used constantly by the mother who comes five or six times a day to bathe herself and the baby. She always takes water from the pot kept inside the enclosure and it is refilled each time with warm water heated elsewhere. The mother regularly pours warm water over the child's umbilical stump, for so long as it does not drop off she is in a state of taboo and can do no work.

In some villages the placenta is buried under a *bassia latifolia* tree and a large stone is placed above, ' for this tree does every kind of work for us '. Very small babies are sometimes buried in the same place so that they can suck the milky sap.

When the stump falls off, it is buried in the placenta-pit ; should it be dug up and eaten, for example, by a dog, the child would cease suckling and die. After a year has passed the Perma comes to offer compensation of a fowl and rice-beer to the Earth Mother because they have offended her by burying the placenta and cord in the ground.

846 Once the stump has dropped the mother is free of the restrictions on her and when she feels ready—' when her body is dry and 852 clean '—she has a final bath, cowdungs the house and begins to cook and live normally again. The father shaves the child's head. The mother herself destroys the little bathing-hut. The father smears the arrow with oil and puts it in the roof of the house. When a boy grows up it is shown to him and he can use it for hunting, though no special virtue seems to attach to it.

852 On the day of the mother's ceremonial entry into the house, there is a little feast, cooked by the woman herself, on the veranda. 553 The Perma and a few neighbours are invited and they have a pot of rice-beer. Before they drink, each of the visitors dips his finger into it and gives it to the child to suck. The mother presents oil and a ring to each of the women who helped her and to the Waddai and Perma. The child is often, though not always, named on this occasion. A chicken is dedicated by being fed on rice and is set free. A year later it is sacrificed and a bit of the liver is given to the child. If a baby cries continually it is supposed that it has been given the wrong name and the Waddai renames it and dedicates another chicken. In Gadapal I was told that if the gods disapprove a child's name, they send Hidmaraj to make it itch and Markaraj to make it cry.

845 The Marias do not seem to have made up their minds about twins. One village thinks them lucky, another disastrous. There

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Little boys practise the bison-horn dance with head-dresses made of bamboo rings which have bamboo 'horns' sticking up in front and at the back a spike ornamented with feathers. They beat their stomachs or use bits of wood instead of drums.

Page 189, *line* 31. But I found everywhere that both kinds of Marias were also accustomed to use the fire-drill. The fire-saw of the Hill Marias can easily be worked by two men; there is no difference between it and the Baiga or Juang saw, which is always handled by two persons.

When Bison-horn Marias go to fire their clearings, they should as far as possible approach them with their faces towards the east. The Perma and Gaita break two small branches, the Perma a dry and the Gaita a green or 'living' branch, and drive them into the ground. They light these with a burning log from the Hearth of the Departed in one or other of their houses. If both branches burn well, it is a sign that the clearing also will burn properly; but if one burns and the other does not, it means that the clearing will only burn in patches and will thus be insufficiently manured. Special offerings must then be made.

Page 225, *line* 9; *page* 278, *line* 25. In one village—but only one—at Mokhpal, I found scepticism about the tradition that the menhirs grow in size. Here the Bison-horn Marias laughed at the idea and said that, if—for example—a stone grew smaller, it was probably because the ground was damp and it sank down.

Page 225, *line* 11. The Bison-horn Marias believe that the Dead are reborn, if at all, in their own homes; they generally deny that they ever reappear as animals. Yet an animal may be born in, or have a powerful influence over, a human being. A girl at Mokhpal was born with the left side of her face covered with a sort of fur; the Marias said that an ancestor who was killed by a bear had been reborn in the child. As a result the wearing of dancing-masks covered with bear-fur has been abandoned, for fear that the wearers should be affected in some future birth. A man killed by a tiger may reappear in one of his descendants with marks of the claws on the neck. It may be that to people who live so near to nature rebirth in animal form does not seem specially distasteful. Marias and Murias live close to their animals and love them. At Lakhopal there is a small menhir in memory of a faithful dog.

Page 227, *line* 12. In 1939, Soma Ganda-Maria of Gomagal killed a man, who had seduced his wife, in the most brutal manner by squeezing his testicles till they burst. He then seized his penis saying, 'It was with this that you copulated with my wife,' and tore the skin from it. Finally he throttled him. Anyone who

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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538 not far distant from the Abujhmar. The Kuruk stories are almost certainly current also among the Bison-horn Maria. Two of the five specifically Bison-horn Maria tales, like one of the two Maria tales, are about monkeys. The first describes a helpful monkey which is treated with great ingratitude by human beings; in the second—as in Grigson's tale—a monkey marries a human girl and does not make a very great success of the union. In neither case, however, is there any reference to the dispareunia which the Baigas delight to emphasize in stories of the 'Beast Marriage' type. Two of the other tales, 'The Magic Eyes' and 'The Loving Ghost' are exceptionally charming and, while full of conventional folk-lore clichés, strike a note of some originality. In my *Myths of Middle India*, I give Bison-horn Maria legends of the creation of the world, the making of the sun and moon, the origin of fire and several stories of the Vagina Dentata cycle.

Page 280, *line* 34. In the country round Gidam and Barsur, 178 many clans that follow the megalithic tradition elsewhere have abandoned the practice of erecting menhirs, though the Barse, Kalmu and Kunjami clans continue it and erected twenty-six menhirs within the limits of the Gidam Revenue Circle in the years 1938-42. In the Jagdalpur tahsil, though the custom is less well maintained here than elsewhere, the Poyami, Vetti, Bekor, Kuharami, Marvi Padami and Muchaki at least continue to erect *uraskal* stones. Near Jagdalpur, however, and in the neighbourhood of Paknar, there has been some falling off of the practice.

Whatever may be the reason for the abandonment of megalithic customs—and I am rather sceptical about the influence of the Hindu taboo on beef-eating—certain clans have been affected by the warnings of their priests. In Vagriguda, for example, a village in the heart of an area where these customs flourish undisturbed, no menhirs are erected now because once when the village was overwhelmed by an epidemic, the Siraha declared that it was because the Village Mother was annoyed at the practice. The ●[187] Telami clan have abandoned the practice in the Dhurli area because once when they were quarrying a stone to serve as a menhir, a snake wriggled out of the crack, and this was taken as a sign of the divine displeasure. I believe that many culture changes in India are not due to the spread of civilization but are caused by incidents like these.

Page 281, *line* 24. The upper stone is called *danya-kal* and its 000 supports *odiyal*. In the Kutru zamindari, the Akri clan calls the upper stone *gariyakal*. The Chudala Marvi clan erects both *uraskal* and *danyakal* stones throughout the Konta tahsil and in such villages as Gogonda, Mankapal and Koya Vekur. So do the

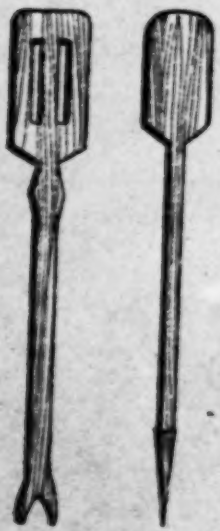
2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

241 When this is done and the ground is cooled, the bullocks are brought and chelik and motiari with their ploughs drive the ashes deep into the soil.

The plough is 'the lizard that runs into its hole in the dry tree': it has 'three heads and ten legs': the cowhide reins of the oxen are described as 'the dead bullocks that go before a living man'.

[796] Before the seed can be sown, the Wijja Pandum must be celebrated. This festival, which is preceded by a ceremonial hunt, is held at any time from April to June. Essential to the festival, one version of which I describe in detail in Chapter VII, is the hunt which foretells the success or [787] failure of the crops, the feast on the animals killed, and the sprinkling of sacrificial blood on the seed—some of which is taken away by every householder. In some villages, at the end of the ceremonies, the chelik roll the Gaita in mud from an ant-hill.

The night before the actual sowing, which is sometimes fixed when new leaf-shoots appear on the bhoir tree, all the men again sleep in the ghotul and the motiari stay at home to ensure chastity and thus avoid any possible infection of menstrual blood. On their way to the fields in the morning, they put a small heap of seed at any cross-roads they pass. Each householder has a leaf-cup of the seed that was consecrated with blood at the Wijja Pandum, and sows this after the Gaita has sacrificed a chicken in his field.



417 Fig. 2. *Dayi* wooden spoons for stirring food while cooking. Length 1′ 9″

The Muria, unlike the Hill Maria, sows different kinds of seed in different places, but like the Hill Maria he sows them at different times. In the west and central areas there are three main sowings.

The first sowing, immediately after the first rains, is of small millets—*turo kokala* or *kosra*, *kiltusa* and *mandia*. *Rahar dāl* is sown with the *mandia*. Gourds and pumpkins are sown at the same time.

The next sowing is in early July of rice, *kuthi* and *urad dāl* as well as beans.

The last sowing, of what is called *os kosra*, is done in August, though not on ground that has already been used that year. Rice is again sown and *mung* and *kulthi* pulses.

Before the actual sowing of the seed, the Muria prepare their fences, and the field-huts and watching-platforms for the guarding of their crops. The fences are not, of course, as in civilised areas, to keep out their fellow-men but to protect the crops against wild animals: bison and deer are plentiful in north Bastar, especially in the Makri area, and can do much damage to the fields.

There are many kinds of fencing. Sometimes there is none at all; in the jungle clearings a line of poles is enough, in the permanent fields the embankments make a clear division. Sometimes a strong *gawao* stockade is made by placing hundreds of logs upright in the ground. Fences of bamboo wattle are also made.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

and for killing small birds there is the club-arrow. The Muria do not seem to know the *ongrām*, the three- or four-pointed wooden arrow used by the Bison-horn Maria for killing snakes and rats.

The Muria use traps extensively. Sometimes they dig a deep pit on a path where they have seen the tracks of animals, cover it with grass and then drive the game towards it. If any animal falls in, they beat it to death with clubs. They hunt the mongoose with dogs. For catching crocodiles, they make a noose with a slip-knot and attach it by a cord to a tree by the river. For a porcupine, 'the old woman bringing her load of fuel from the hill', they make what they call a *thongara* trap, a cage of wood with a heavy block suspended above which, when the animal releases it by treading on a bit of bamboo below, falls down and crushes it. Similar fall-traps are used to catch small leopards and panthers. For larger animals they also use a trap with a door. The trap is divided into two parts. It looks rather like a pigsty, and a pig is actually kept as bait in an inner room carefully shut off from the main trap. When the leopard enters, it dashes towards the pig and so treads on an ingenious arrangement of bamboo and cords which releases a string attached to a long pole balanced above. At the other end of the pole hangs the door, which then slides down and the animal is caught. Of these traps, the Muria riddle—'The horse is kicking its feet in someone else's shed' and 'The Manjhi dies eating, eating' (*Tinjor tinjor hāyna mānjhi*).

Spring-traps, called in Gondi *ahachār*, corresponding to the Hindi *thonga*, are made to catch rabbits. A long bamboo is bent over and attached to the ground by a cord ending in a noose, inside which rice or other food is sprinkled. When the hare goes to eat, it releases the catch, the bamboo springs into the air and the unlucky creature is caught in the noose.

Bird-lime is used to catch birds and ingenious arrangements of nooses set in bamboo frames are set over a nest or on a path known to be used by birds. To catch the Goggle-eyed Plover, for example, the Muria make a line of ashes across a path with a small bamboo loop and a noose in the middle. The bird avoids the ashes and makes for the loop and so is caught.

I have noticed in several places that traps are set in or near the burial ground. There was a rat-trap under the shadow of the menhirs at Baghbera. At Markabera, a leopard-trap was only a few yards from the memorial stones. At Magheda I saw an ingenious peacock-trap in the graveyard. A small hole in the ground was filled with grain. A noose was laid round it and hidden with earth; the end of the cord was held by a man concealed in a hide some distance off. When the peacock came to eat, he jerked the cord and caught it.

FIG. 9. Powder-pouch of gaur horn covered with chital scrotum
Half actual size

While the individual Muria is a keen hunter all the year round, whole villages go out for ceremonial hunts before the greater festivals. Hunting is almost a religious exercise and is very sensitive to magic; in Almer the chelik hunted every day for a month without success, although the neighbouring villages got plenty of game, as a result of a sorcerer's enchantments. Such

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

224 796 ceremonial hunts are held before most of the greater festivals, and their success or failure augurs a good or a bad harvest. The Muria generally take a Siraha medium with them to discover with divine assistance where game is to be ●787 found, and before starting they worship their bows and arrows. They gather under a saja tree on the path leading to the jungle, and place the bows and arrows across the way. They offer aonla rings and stand praying, 'Look Mahapurub, look Kadrengal, look Tallur Muttai, look all ye Departed, we go hunting, will we get anything?' To this the Siraha medium replies for the god, 'Unless I help, you won't get even a squirrel'. Then they say again, 'Let us not return empty; if we get anything, we will reward you with an egg or chick; if we fail, we will abuse you. If we cannot trust you for so little, how can we trust you to give us rice and kodon?'

Then the Gaita plucks a tendu or saja leaf, and puts on it a spider's web. He goes to every member of the party and wipes his face of dirt or sweat, smearing it on the leaf and saying, 'With this we remove all evil of witch or ghost; so may we have good hunting'. When he has thrown the leaf away, the hunters pick up their bows and arrows and go towards the jungle without looking back.

224 796 The Muria also go for a ceremonial hunt before the appointment of a new Gaita, who can only be appointed if they succeed in killing a female deer.

776 The god of hunting is generally called Kadrengal, the husband of Tallur Muttai. The same story is told in the Central Provinces of Mahadeo and Parvati.

> Long ago Kadrengal went into the jungle to make a plough. Tallur Muttai prepared the midday meal, but her husband was absorbed in his work and did not return. Tallur Muttai got very angry; she made a tiger out of straw, putting a wooden spoon as tail and a cooking-pot for the head. She covered it with a blanket and with lamp-black made stripes all over it. Then she said to the creature, 'Go and find my husband'. The tiger went to the place where Kadrengal was working and roared at him, but Kadrengal was not afraid and threw chips of the wood from his plough at it saying, 'Go, dogs, and drive that thing away'. The chips of wood turned into wild dogs and chased away the tiger. Since then hunters have worshipped Kadrengal and have held the jungle dog as sacred.

At Phunder the Muria said that before hunting they worshipped one or other of the Rau of the neighbouring forests. Here live Khotela Rau, Markhund Rau, Khamma Rau and Durga Rau. Each hunter worships the god that was chosen long ago by his ancestors, but should at any time his ancestors not help him then he changes and worships one of the other three. Every [782] three years a hunter should make sacrifices to his god. If he fails to do so the god will take the form of some wild animal and attack him. It is said that those who worship Markhund Rau and Durga Rau are generally the most fortunate.

At the end of a successful hunt, especially when it is a ceremonial hunt, certain parts of the animal must be removed and offered to Kadrengal, the Departed, and any other local gods whose assistance has been invoked. The Gaita sacrifices a small bit of the liver, the tip of the tail and tongue, and the man who made the kill places his bow and arrows or gun in front of the Pot of the Departed in his house and makes similar offerings to his ancestors.

224 841 A man must observe chastity and fast the night before he goes to hunt. As he goes he must carefully watch the omens. He must meticulously observe the prescribed taboos. Hunting is particularly sensitive to the contagion of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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full figure and the child is 'fine as a young tiger'. The Hare Birth, however, occurs after only eighteen months, and the child is weak and sickly. The Frog Birth, after twelve months, is also bad for the child. In the Lizard Birth, when the child resembles a lizard, there is an interval of three years, but the mother is herself weak and her breasts secrete insufficient nourishment. 843 844

When a girl suffers from menorrhagia she has a Green Lizard Birth, and the child is weak, but the offspring of Mother Birth, when the period begins and ends punctually, is vigorous.

Once the mother is pregnant she is subject to the usual routine and taboos, though generally I think an increase of restrictions at this time is due to Hindu influence.[1] The Muria woman's movements are not greatly controlled, but she must not climb a tree and should stay indoors during an eclipse. She must be very careful not to steal anything; if she takes bread, she will bear a male child with his ear bent over; if she steals haldi, garlic, or ginger, the child will be born with six fingers. In one village my wife was recommended to tie a mango in her sari; then, when she had a child, it would never be ill, 'even its nose wouldn't run'. But it is dangerous to eat a mango, for it may cause abortion. 843

The husband is also subject to taboos. He must not cross the blooded path of a hunted and wounded animal. He has to eat separately at festivals. Neither he nor his wife may eat the head or legs of any animal killed for sacrifice or in a ceremonial hunt.

The scene of birth is generally on the verandah or in a cattle-shed. A child must not be delivered in the kitchen or the room where the Pot of the Departed is kept. There are no professional midwives and assistance is given by the women of the family and sometimes by the Gaita's wife. Few precautions are taken. The mother is given ordinary food and often begins to work on the third day. 844

The umbilical cord is cut with a knife in a few villages (in Temrugaon, for example), but more generally with an arrow-head, whether the child be a boy or girl, by the mother, sister, elder brother's wife or Gaita's wife.

The placenta is wrapped in a siari leaf and buried in a pit behind the house, and a small screen of branches is erected round it. Until the umbilical stump falls off, this pit is not filled in; it is covered with a stone or a wooden seat on which the mother sits to bathe once or twice a day for about six weeks. During this period, she must not go into the house but must stay on the verandah. The digging-stick with which the pit was dug and the arrow with which the cord was cut are driven into the ground beside the pit. A pot of water is kept near by. When the stump falls, they throw it into the pit and fill it up with rubbish and earth. When the mother stops bathing and resumes her ordinary domestic duties, they wash the digging-stick and arrow, offer liquor and apply haldi to them. The stick is put back in the house, and the arrow is stuck into the roof or given away. It is not regarded as having any special significance or value after its work is done. 844 787

If the 'signs' of a tiger or a snake appear in the soil above the buried placenta, the child is expected to be killed by a tiger or bitten by a snake. Should the water in the pot leak out of its own accord, the child will meet its death by drowning. A strangulating umbilical cord suggests that the child will die by hanging, either in jail or through suicide.

[1] Compare with the very simple Maria tradition the elaborate regulations of the more sophisticated tribesmen of the Central Provinces described in my article, 'Conception, Pregnancy and Birth among the Tribesmen of the Maikal Hills', *JASB*, Vol. IX (1943), pp. 99–148.

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841 515 sleeps at home for a day, still subject to most of her taboos. On the following day she bathes again and anoints herself, or allows her mother or sister to anoint her. In most villages she is free after the second bath. She may go again to the fields and in the evening to the ghotul. In Binjhli, however, and in a few other villages, I have found the rule that she must have three baths: the Deer Bath on the fifth day after the beginning of her period, the Lizard Bath on the sixth and the Hare Bath on the seventh. Only on the evening of the seventh day may the girl return to the ghotul. This is partly a hygienic measure—the Muria consider that a girl who finishes her bathing on her fourth day is 'as dirty as a Hindu' but one who takes three baths is 'white as a Raja'—partly a measure of birth control. The Muria [842] share the universal Indian belief that conception is most likely to occur on the day the menstrual flow ceases.[1] This is commonly on the fourth day, and so by segregating the motiari for the dangerous period the Binjhli chelik consider that the risk of pregnancy is lessened. Even so, when a girl returns to the ghotul after her menses, she warns the boy with whom she is sleeping: 'I have just bathed my head; if there is a baby, it will be yours: will you be responsible for it?' In Binjhli the chelik told us that the girls make their [833] lovers promise to practise *coitus interruptus* on this day, and it is the duty of the Belosa to warn the girls about it. In Markabera, however, the girls returned to the ghotul directly their flow stopped, and no special precautions were observed.

841 522 When the girl returns to the ghotul after her period the boys rag her. 'O Tiloka, the bank was broken, the water was pouring out like a river, we were tired of mending it. But now all the water has run out and the field is dry.' Or sometimes the boys say, 'Your pot had a hole in it, but today you mended it with lac'. And again, 'Who dug the hole and let the water out?' And that evening they pretend she is still unclean and cry, '*Chi chi chi*; don't touch me!' And they may say to her special chelik, 'What a lucky man you are: your rice has ripened quickly: tonight you can cut the crop'. But it is said that after the first menstruation, in those ghotul where there are ghotul mates, the chelik treats his girl with special tenderness. 'There is no end to his love for her; he doesn't let her sleep all night.' In a mysterious way, his motiari has become a woman; she is different, mature, and doubly precious.

841 787 As we would expect, the girls often suffer from dreams at this time. In Padbera they said that the Yer Kanyang who lives in the river feeds on the blood of washed-out menstrual cloths. This naiad is very lonely with no one to keep her company; so she visits the motiari in the menstruation hut and plays with them in their dreams. Because these girls dance with her all night, they are slack and weary during the day. The girls at Padbera can tell when they are about to begin their periods because they dream of the Yer Kanyang and see the river. The river-dream is everywhere prophetic of the period, especially if husband and wife or chelik and his ghotul mate dream of a river in flood. This is an important dream, for it enables the women who are favoured with it to beware of going to tabooed places where their period might begin unexpectedly. If girls dream of fire or of flying up into the sky, it is a warning that they will suffer from irregular menstruation. The end of the period is heralded by a dream of a dried-up pond.

841 776 Breach of the menstruation rules is very serious. The importance attached to them may be seen by the interesting and curious case of the goddess Pendrawandin. This goddess, whose story is given on page 178, was originally

[1] Cf. J. J. Meyer, *Sexual Life in Ancient India* (London, 1930), Vol. II, p. 368

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CHAPTER FIVE

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

I. Betrothal

584 THE next critical moment in the life of a Muria is the betrothal. This may be done at any age, before puberty or after it, but it is generally arranged later rather than sooner. It is followed, after a number of years, by the marriage, which is still nearly everywhere adult.

I propose to give in this chapter an account of the ceremonies of betrothal and marriage so that our picture of the course of Muria life may be complete, but I will reserve a discussion of the broader aspects of marriage to Part Two of the book so that they can be considered, where they ought to be considered, in relation to the ghotul.

The betrothal ceremony is called in Gondi *pungār mikchna*, the 'plucking of the flower', *pungār kurhi*, 'looking at the flower' and *talk dēyna*, 'going to beg'. These expressions indicate the chief features of the ceremony: the boy's parents make two or even three visits to the house of the future bride, the 'flower' whom the boy will pick and put in his turban.

On the first occasion, before setting out, the boy's father offers liquor in siari leaf-cups to the Departed, one for the boy, one for the girl and one for the Departed themselves. They wait for a time, and if they find one of the leaves has fallen or curled up, they take it that the omens are unfavourable, and either abandon the project or postpone it. In fact, this is the time when the greatest attention is paid to omens.

584 Muria omens are specially important before an engagement, on the way to the forest for a hunt and before setting out on a journey. These
● 787 'symbols of the future seen in the present'[1] do not influence events, but declare what is about to happen. If the members of a betrothal party see a bad omen on the way they return home because they know it will be a sheer waste of time to proceed; their visit simply cannot be successful.

787 It is through animals especially that the Departed and clan-ancestors warn or encourage the living about the future. 'The Departed', they said at Palli, 'speak through animals telling us to go or not to go.' On a ceremonial hunt, if one of the party fails in some ritual duty to the dead, an offended ancestor may take the form of an animal and attack him as a warning.

Muria omens can be divided quite simply into good and bad.

GOOD OMENS

An usir bird cries *sing-sing* on the left.

The cry of the kiddari bird on the left, saying 'Go, go, your business will succeed'.

A jackal going from left to right. 'The left side is regarded as a centre of greater vitality than the right. Hence the jackal going from left to right means that the animal is going away from the life centre, and thus that a death symbol is being removed.'[2]

A monkey cries *hoop-hoop*. It might be supposed that it was the reference to Hanuman and the sacred monkeys that made this lucky

[1] W. G. Archer, *The Blue Grove* (London, 1940), p. 159. [2] Ibid., p. 161.

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but for the fact that the omen can also be bad. If the members of a betrothal party hear a monkey cough, they return home. 787

A tiger or leopard. A symbol of power.

A mango tree. This is lucky because mango leaves are used to decorate the marriage-booth.

A bear. Another symbol of power. The bear is generally looked on as very potent, and its male member is used as an aphrodisiac. [832]

A blue sambhar.

A woman carrying a full pot—though in some villages it is thought unlucky to see any kind of pot.

When a sparrow says *pihik pihik* it means the carriers of officials on tour are coming; if it says *pichu pichu*, it means they are going somewhere else and all is well.

BAD OMENS

An usir bird crying *kichir-kichir* on the right.

The cry of the kiddari bird on the right, saying '*Kiddarr*, don't go, don't go'.

A crow crying *kaw kaw*, eat, eat! Its tail points towards something dead for the vultures to eat.

A snake across the path. A very natural warning of danger.

A woman carrying an empty pot or going to the river with a bundle of dirty clothes.

Anyone throwing away ashes or rubbish.

A plantain tree, for its leaves are placed on a bier and in a grave.

A peacock.

A mongoose.

A rat.

A lizard. If one crosses your path, you should catch it and burn it to ashes.

In some villages, a cat.

A hare.

Thursday and Saturday are unlucky days, on which important work should not be started.

If the omens are favourable, the father of the bridegroom, with two or three relatives carrying several bottles of the best liquor, set out for the bride's house. When they reach their destination they sit down in the court, and presently the girl's father says, 'Have you come on any business?' They answer, 'We hear that a flower has blossomed in your house; we have come to pluck it'. 'Why do you want to pluck it?' asks the girl's father. 'So that we may stick it in our hair.' 'Have you seen the omens on the way?' asks the girl's father. 'Yes, and they were good to us.'[1] 584

If the parents are willing they now usually ask the girl her opinion. If she refuses, they tell the visitors that the flower is not for plucking, but if she

[1] W. G. Archer has made a careful study of these symbolic dialogues during marriage negotiations (*op. cit.*, pp. 147ff and *Man in India*, Vol. XXIII (1943), pp. 147ff.). The flower symbolism does not seem to be used by the Uraon, but Russell and Hiralal notice it for the Kond (*op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 467f) and give some charming sentences used by the Turi. 'I hear that a sweet-scented flower has blossomed in your house and I have come to gather it.' To which the bride's father may reply, 'You may take my flower, if you will not throw it away when its sweet scent is gone'. (*Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 590.) The same symbolism is known to the Kharia and I have recorded its use among the Bison-horn Maria, the Kawar and the Dhurwa in Bastar.

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Sai le le bo bo bo! Sai le le bo bo bo!

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O young darling, whence have you come,
Have you come for the play of love,
With an ox-goad under the mango tree?
Why have you come, big-breasted love?
I will catch you and enjoy you.
Saikobai, why have you come?
Your pubic hairs are like a shrub in Amgaon.
We were yoked together in the ghotul.
Now you are going, and I bid you farewell.
Now you are leaving the ever-thrilling ghotul.
I took you under the pipal tree and shook you to and fro.
By the ant-hill I tumbled you.
Your ghotul lover has come for you,
But no longer are you there to welcome him.

Taking the Omens

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Now the final omens must be taken. The Gaita placed an earthen pot full of water on the verandah of the headman's house, and dropped grains of rice two by two into it. For a successful marriage the grains must meet tip to tip. If they meet crosswise, there will be quarrels; if they both sink, the married pair will die together in a year; if they do not meet at all, the girl will elope with someone else. On this occasion, the two grains sank to the bottom, and the headman sent round an inquiry whether any of the near relatives of the bride had just begun to menstruate—a calamity which had previously been known to disturb the omens. At about the same time the bridegroom fell into a trance, twitching, shivering, stretching himself and then falling inert to the ground. Apparently none of the women were in the tabooed condition and the bridegroom's mother—a managing woman with an enormous bun of hair on the top of her head which caused some to regard her as an incarnation of the Hindu god Mahadeo—thought quite obviously that it was I with my camera who was causing all the trouble, but did not like to say so. After a time, however, when the Gaita had made some extravagant promises to the gods, the boy recovered and the rice grains floated round and hit each other most properly tip to tip.

Filling the Kalsa

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The little kalsa-pitcher, which is to be placed by the mahua tree in the marriage-booth, must be filled with rice. The motiari put a basket before the bride. They place the pot inside and fill the bride's hands with rice, covering them with a cloth. Several of them catch hold of her hands and move them up and down above the kalsa, singing *Rolo*, until all the rice has fallen into the pot. When the pot is full the motiari stand up with a loud cry of *Soto!* (penis).

Songs

1

Nandi kute dotda kurka khilla kotda.	The reeds grow by the river, where the old bear lies.
Killa jilla kotda dulli le kotda.	With whom is he lying? He's lying with the bride.

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THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

Angār mute rāni ra.	Angar Mute is the Rani.
Yer mōyuṭṭi kilandu ra.	Weeping, she is bathing in the water.
Jhāro jhāro kilandu ra.	As she weeps the tears fall.
Pilāmaro dhoti ra!	O her silken cloth!
Dhoti tune kurandu ra.	She looks at her cloth.
Tōna dudong ātska ra?	How can we describe her breasts?
Mākha kāyáng dudo ra.	Her breasts are as the bel fruit.
Ghāṭum tikeda wōndung ra.	From the bathing-place she is coming home.
Lonz tike kandung ra	In the house
Mul gathe māta ra	There are so many relatives
Suju buju kile ra.	That we cannot count them.

The rest of the song describes Angar Mute's court, to which comes the Pargana Manjhi with small legs, his spear over his shoulder, a big-bellied Kotwar and many other officials. The Manjhi delivers judgement, giving a hundred rupees to the Raja and only a pair of bullocks for the Muria. 'One of the bullocks had no tail, the other had no horns.' Then the chelik and motiari who have escorted the corpse to the burial ground are described. There are sixty boys led by Kosi Leyur and sixty girls led by Gara Karre Mode, the Belosa of the ghotul, whose vagina is sixteen cubits long and whose pubic hairs are five cubits long. 'A jungle boar could roll in her vagina.' The boys break her bangles and push the pieces into her navel with a *jharar jharar* noise.

All this, which seems merely coarse to us, is exceedingly amusing to the Muria; the song is really a comic effort intended to relieve the tension of the funeral now that the main rites are done.

VI. Divining the Cause of Death

It is always important at a funeral to discover the cause of so monstrous and unnatural a thing as death. At Binjhli, when magic is suspected, they halt the bier before it reaches the burial ground and the Siraha medium recites a string of names of suspected persons. When the name of the guilty man is mentioned, the bier moves forward violently of its own accord. This method, which resembles the use of an Anga clan-god for divination, is common throughout the State, and Grigson has recorded a similar, though more elaborate, rite in use among the Hill Maria.[1]

At Kehalakot, the Muria remove some locks of the dead man's hair and a little earth from beneath his head. They make a small flag-pole with the hair and the earth and a saja leaf stuck on an ebony stick. They take this to the jungle and a boy holds it while the Siraha recites the names of any suspected causes or people. When the right word is uttered, the flag is said to quiver. At Kokori the villagers go to the boundary and put five heaps of rice in a row, one for Mahapurub, one for witchcraft, one for Mother Earth, one for the ancestors of the house, and one for any local godling who may have been troublesome. The people sit some distance away, and spend the time having their hair done by their relatives-in-law. Presently a crow flies down and pecks at one or other of the piles of rice, thus revealing the cause of death.

The *thumbdari* divination is done with chickens on the second or third day after death. One chicken is taken from the house of the dead and one from

[1] Grigson, op. cit., p. 272.

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761 the house of a samdhi. The chickens are exchanged so that a representative
of the dead person's house holds the samdhi's chicken and vice versa. The
●787 usual piles of rice are made and the chickens held before them while a string
of names is recited. When the chickens peck at the rice, it is believed that
they have revealed the cause of death. The chickens are then sacrificed and
cooked with the rice on the spot.

It is commonly believed all over India, as by the Muria, that the way the smoke rises from the funeral pyre indicates the sort of death the deceased has suffered. If the smoke goes straight up, it indicates a natural death; if it goes crooked, it proclaims the hand of witchcraft.

VII. 'Bringing Back the Soul'

769 The curious rite of 'bringing back the soul' is known to the Hill Maria and the Bison-horn Maria, but is most common among the Muria who practise it in many different forms. Since this rite is performed throughout the Central Provinces, and since some of these Muria probably represent an ancient migration from the north into Bastar, it is not surprising that we should find this cultural link between them.[1]

It is rather difficult to describe the rites because of the bewildering variety of detail to be discovered from village to village, but it is possible to get a fairly clear picture of the main outlines.

After death, on the following day or at any time up to three years, when there is sufficient provision in the house, the relations of the dead man are summoned for a feast. Sometimes the relations are warned by a dream that the spirit of the dead is dissatisfied and that they must do something to comfort and honour him.

The people assemble, both *akomāma* and *dādābhai* relatives, and enjoy a feast in the dead man's house. The next morning they go singing, both men and women, attended by chelik and motiari with their drums and cymbals to the nearest tank or river. In some villages a samdhi makes a small booth on the bank; nine reeds are planted in the ground, mango leaves tied to them and a string run round them seven times. On the top he puts a small mat and on the ground he makes a circle with red and black powder and places an egg in the middle in the name of the Yer Kanyang (the Water Maiden). The Gaita then puts three rings of aonra fibre in the circle and an earthen pot filled with water.

[1] Accounts of bringing back the soul have been given for several tribes by Russell and Hiralal, for the Gond (Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 94), Ahir (III, p. 28), Halba (III, p. 195), Kharia (III, p. 450), Kond (III, p. 469), Lohar (IV, p. 124), and Taonia (IV, 341). The practice is probably common to all the tribes in the Central Provinces. It is said that the Gond once buried their dead inside the house in order to ensure re-birth within the family; possibly 'bringing back the soul' has a similar purpose. The Gond customs recorded by Russell and Hiralal resemble those of the Muria. Others, however, differ. For example, the Kharia bring back the soul of the dead by attracting it at night to a lamp placed at a cross-roads. They sit near the lamp calling on the dead man and when the flame wavers in the wind, they break the lamp saying that the soul has returned to them. The Kond are said to have brought home the soul riding on a bow-stick covered with cloth. The Lohar have a custom, which I have myself noted for the Pando of east Bilaspur. Rice-flour is spread on the floor of the kitchen and covered with a brass plate. The mourners go to the village boundary, again spread flour on the ground, call on the dead to come and wait till some worm or insect crawls on to the flour. They catch the creature with a pinch of dough and carry it home and let it loose in the house. The flour under the brass plate is scrutinised and it is said that usually the foot-prints of a man or animal are found; this indicates the body of the man or beast to which the soul has passed.

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rupee to purchase rings in the bazaar. The Hichami Gaita then dug the hole and they put a saja leaf in the bottom and the stone above it. Soon afterwards a second stone was brought for Birju's mother and this was placed separately, for it is the rule that the memorials for men and women should not usually be together, though this rule, like all rules, is often broken. They bathed the stones and put a *gappa* basket with roots and rice in front of the woman's stone and a dish in front of the man's. Everyone present put a mark of oil and haldi on the stones, just as they might have done at a marriage to the bride and bridegroom. They returned home and sacrificed a bullock and tied the tail to the old man's menhir. On this occasion the souls of the deceased were brought back to the Hanalkot, which stands in the village itself. 769

The cow or bullock is often chosen by old people while they are still alive. Widows, who may reasonably expect to be neglected, are insistent on dedicating such an animal.

XII. General Ideas about the Menhirs

There is a universal belief that the memorial stones grow in size if the soul of the dead is satisfied with the arrangements that are made for him. I have on several occasions spoken to the Muria of the north (who erect very much smaller stones than the Maria of the south) about the great *uraskal* of the Bison-horn Maria. They invariably reply, 'But, of course, these stones are very old and they have grown; they could never have put up such big ones'. They believe that even the small stones of the north will grow in time. Kodu, the very intelligent Malguzar of Khutgaon in the extreme north of the State, told me that in the past twenty years he has definitely seen the stones grow in size. A very small stone is put for a baby and it is believed that it will grow gradually until it has reached the size it should have been had it been placed for a man of twenty.

When a stone grows it is considered fortunate. There is sure to be happiness and good luck for the family. If a stone falls down or goes crooked, the relatives consult the Siraha and then put it straight and offer whatever sacrifices he has recommended. It is generally supposed that when a stone falls, it is an indication that the ghost of the dead is angry or feels neglected. In some places, the collapse of a menhir is regarded as prophetic of disaster, and generally should white ants make a nest over the stone it is considered a bad omen. But in some places there is a belief that there is no need to worry about this after twenty years have passed. After twenty years the Hanal has become completely mingled with his ancestors and no longer exists as a separate entity. When an old stone falls down, therefore, the Muria perform no ceremonies and leave it where it is. [187]

XIII. The Hanal Pata

It is very difficult to persuade the Muria to repeat the songs connected with death at any but the proper time. This is quite natural, for there is to all simple minds something dark and ominous about talking of the dead. I did not find a Hill or Bison-horn Maria who was willing to repeat a single song. It has only been among the more open-hearted and friendly Muria that I have been able to get a few songs, mostly in Gondi, which are used during a funeral and at the time of erecting a menhir. I have already given the funeral songs; I will now quote a few songs used at the later ceremonies. 533 761 769

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opposite direction. Once I had made an offering of silver to the god, however, they became very friendly and I was able to witness all that happened

Carried by four men, and accompanied by the village elders, the Anga Deo was carried from house to house round the village. The god stopped before each house, and the women had to come out with an offering of a leaf-cup of rice and a copper coin, and walk under the god and away the other side. If all was well the Dhurwa placed a ring of aonra leaf on the threshold and a bit of iron slag and hammered it with an axe.

But in two houses the Anga scented trouble; he refused to accept the offerings of the householders, swinging round indignantly, then rushing to and fro, whirling and turning in an alarming manner. He pointed out an old man and woman in one house, and the householder in another as specially affected by the evil. The priests hastily poured liquor in front of the god 'for he becomes thirsty when there is some mischief in his presence'.

At last they took the Anga back to his hut outside the village and everybody sat round to discuss what had happened and to consider what was to be done. On this occasion the mediums proclaimed that it was not a magician or witch, but a number of deities affronted at not receiving sufficient honour—Pendrawandin, Pardeshin, Koriya Pat, Garba Rau and the local ancestors—who were causing the trouble. That day and the next day were spent in sacrifice to the Anga and divinations by the local mediums. On the morning of the third day diagnosis having been fully established, they went to effect a cure.

The bearers carried the Anga to the first house which had been shown as 'infected'. They stood before the door and a Siraha-medium sat down before it. The god 'climbed' on him and he revealed what things were needed to appease the angry gods. He made two little images of black wax to represent the *kus* digging-bar of Koriya Pat and the axe of Pendrawandin. The owner of the house brought out a basket of rice and many little leaf-packets of parched gram, rice, lamp-black, rice-flour, haldi. The medium danced and postured before the god, and the Dhurwa took two chickens for the Rau, a pig for Pendrawandin, and a goat for Koriya Pat and made them eat a little rice. Each householder present put a rice-mark on the goat saying, 'Whatever evil disease, ghost or god is troubling us, take to yourself and carry away'.

After this the bearers were suddenly impelled to take the Anga out into the jungle and we all followed. The Anga wandered about erratically, but at last came to a halt at a point where two paths crossed, before an ant-hill. The medium fell into a trance again and called out instructions in a high clear voice. The Dhurwa cleared the ground and made a criss-cross pattern of black and white. He placed seven little piles of rice in a row. He made the sacrificial animals eat, and then killed them, dropping the blood on every pile of rice. With his knife he made a circle to enclose the god, and nailed a piece of slag into the ground.

Then the old man and woman who had been proclaimed as 'infected' came to the front and, holding bunches of *chir* grass (the grass from which brooms are made) behind them, broke them in their hands, threw them away with a gesture of finality, spat and walked hurriedly home without looking round, and by another way. The Anga also was taken home by another route back to its camp.

I was not able to see the ceremonies for the purification of the other house. The Anga demanded an offering of the fur of a wild squirrel, and this took some time to find. Two days later, however, the rites were performed and the village was cleared of its supernatural dangers.

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[354] The Bara Dongar party, richer by a few copper coins and a little rice, returned home the next day.

778 Among the Bastar gods, these Anga are the most widely regarded by the aboriginal population. They are homely and familiar, and closely related to the life of every day. They constantly intervene in human affairs. They are keenly sensitive to the presence of evil. Their position as gods of the clans gives them great influence, for it means they have to do with marriage and death, and all offences against clan custom and morality. The cult of the Anga is thus still very much alive and since it has been assimilated to the Hinduism of the Ruling Chief it is likely to endure.

776 But though the future of the Anga cult is assured, its origin is obscure. It is just possible, however, that this god whose name seems to be connected with the Sanskrit-Hindi word *anga*, meaning 'body',[1] has developed out of the cult of the dead and in particular from the custom of using the corpse carried on its bier as a means of divination.

Russell and Hiralal give an account of this for the Gond of the Central Provinces. I have not myself seen it in Bastar, but I am told that there is an exactly similar practice and Grigson has recorded it for the Hill Maria.[2] At a Gond funeral, says Russell, when the body has been carried on its hurdle to the disposal ground, 'the bearers with the body on their shoulders face round to the west, and about ten yards in front of them are placed three saja leaves in a line with a space of a yard between, the first representing the supreme being, the second disembodied spirits, and the third witchcraft. Sometimes a little rice is put on the leaves. An axe is struck three times on the ground, and a villager now cries to the corpse to disclose the cause of his death, and immediately the bearers, impelled, as they believe, by the dead man, carry the body to one of the leaves. If they halt before the first, then the death was in the course of nature; if before the second, it arose from the anger of offended spirits; if before the third witchcraft was the cause. The ordeal may be thrice repeated, the arrangement of the leaves being changed each time. If witchcraft is indicated as the cause of death, and confirmed by the repeated tests, the corpse is asked to point out the sorcerer or witch, and the body is carried along until it halts before someone in the crowd, who is at once seized and disposed of as a witch. Sometimes the corpse may be carried to the house of a witch in another village to a distance of eight or ten miles. In Mandla in such cases a Gunia or exorciser formerly called on the corpse to go forward and point out the witch. The bearers then, impelled by the corpse, made one step forward and stopped. The exorciser then again adjured the corpse, and they made a step, and this was repeated again and again until they halted in front of the supposed witch. All the beholders and the bearers themselves thus thought that they were impelled by the corpse, and the episode is a good illustration of the power of suggestion.'[3]

[1] In *The Ocean of Story*, there are puns on the Land of Anga and the body. Yasahketu 'came to earth to conceal his body', a shameless pun, says Penzer, which could also mean 'to protect the realm of Anga'.—N. M. Penzer, *The Ocean of Story* (London, 1924–8), Vol. III, p. 13. And further, 'it is related in the *Ramayana* that Madana, the god of love, incurred the displeasure of Mahadeo. He fled from the hermitage of the latter to escape his consuming anger, and the region where "he cast off his body (Anga) ", or rather where it was reduced to ashes, has since been known by the name of Anga, and the God of Love has since been called by the name of "Ananga" (without body)'. —Nundolal Dey, 'Notes on Ancient Anga or the District of Bhagalpur', *JASB*, Vol. X, p. 317.

[2] Grigson, op. cit., p. 272.

[3] Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 90.

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The similarity between this description and the account which I have just given of the witch hunt at Palki is very striking. The dead are generally believed to communicate their desires to mankind and to give them instruction about the ordering of their lives. The dead are, of course, specially connected with the clan and its continuity. It is not altogether impossible that out of a cult of the Departed, where in former days the bier was used more than at present for divination and to express the will of the gods, there gradually developed the custom of substituting some symbol for the corpse and at last the 'Anga' for the bier.

This suggestion gets some support from a dream seen by a Bison-horn Maria convict shortly before the fatal quarrel which led to murder and his imprisonment. He dreamt of an Anga, a drum and a village-trumpet. The Anga, he said, stood for the corpse of the murdered man being taken out for burial and the drum and trumpet suggested the funeral. The Anga, he admitted, clearly foreshadowed his terrible deed had he only had the wit to understand it.[1]

It is just possible, of course, that the clan-god takes its name from the land of Anga, a great kingdom—one of the chief sixteen—of ancient India, which has been identified with the present district of Bhagalpur and part of the Santal Parganas. Its boundaries are uncertain and may have also included the districts of Birbhum, Murshidabad and Manbhum.[2] At the time of the *Atharva Veda*, the inhabitants were known as Anga and 'the contemptuous way they were mentioned suggests these were aboriginals'.[3] A connexion between the Muria and Bihar is not impossible and is suggested by many cultural similarities, but I have not found anything resembling the Bastar clan-god in the ethnographic records of Bihar.

V. Muria Temples

Mān ta pen nahi ta pāthar.—If you believe, it is a god; if not, it is a stone.—Muria saying.

J. D. Unwin defined a temple as a 'roofed building other than a grave-house, in which the power in the universe manifests itself and which is specially erected and maintained in order that a right relation may be preserved with that power, the building being such that a man can stand upright inside it'.[4] On this definition the Muria build temples and are in Unwin's 'deistic stage' of culture—a stage which, according to Unwin, is only achieved by those peoples which forbid pre-nuptial intercourse. The Muria provide a striking exception to Unwin's general theory and throw some light upon it.

In a few Muria villages there are no temples. In Almer there is nothing but a few stone seats under saja trees, where the Village Mother is worshipped and the New Eating ceremonies performed. In Kajen the Village Mother forbade the erection of any shrines. But in most villages there are several buildings that fulfil the above definition of a temple. Sometimes these are scattered about the village, one put in the jungle, another in someone's field, a third actually in the compound of a house. In other villages, as for example in Bayanar and Adner, the shrines are all together in one spot where the divine power manifests itself. In Kabonga, the shrines looked like a little village.

[1] See *Maria Murder and Suicide*, p. 213.
[2] Dey, op. cit., p. 318.
[3] Ibid., p. 344.
[4] J. D. Unwin, *Sex and Culture* (London, 1934), p. 14.

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781
825

1 The 'horse' of Lingo Pen at Semurgaon
2 A Dhurwa hobby-horse
3 Hobby-horse at the Malakot wedding
4 The 'horse' of Lingal Pen at Cherpal

[p. 196 (A)]

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793 There are also in most villages one or more Pujari, as they are now called, who are the priests of the more Hinduized deities, such as Danteshwari and her consort Bangaram. In most villages there are many minor deities and each of these may have its special Pujari.

These men do not form in any sense a special priestly class. Only in very rare instances could you recognize a Gaita or Pujari by his bearing or appearance. They are simple, decent, kindly men who spend most of their lives in the field and forest, but they have been chosen, as their parents were chosen, to mediate between men and the unseen mysterious gods. They are invariably, so far a I know, men of good character and never abuse their position unless the dark fate of supernatural power comes upon them and they turn to black magic. They often have to discipline themselves and to exercise a restraint which is not common among the Muria. All village priests must [785] fast and be chaste on the day and night preceding any major ceremony. In some places the period of abstinence may extend to a week.

In some villages, not all, of the Chota Dongar Pargana the Kaser-Gaita is only able to hold his office until he is married. He is thus usually a boy of about sixteen. He is not allowed to go to the ghotul; he must have as little as possible to do with women; even a woman's shadow must not fall on his body. He should not take tobacco from anyone's hands for fear his wife might be in her period. He should not go to a bazaar for fear he unwittingly touch such a woman. He must not talk to a man whose wife is menstruating. In his own home, his cooking-pot is separate from the others. Few boys could endure so rigorous a regime for long, and the Gaita is only made to hold office for three years. Then the god reveals in a dream which of the chelik should take his place. If the old Gaita returns to the ghotul before he is married, he gives the chelik and motiari a feast of pork and liquor.

793 When a Gaita dies his successor is not immediately appointed. In eastern Kondagaon, although the eldest son inherits the Gaitaship automatically, he ● 787 cannot exercise his functions until he has had a certain recognized and official dream appointing him and authorizing him to act. In other parts of the State a ceremonial hunt is held before the son or brother of the dead Gaita can take his place. In the name of the dead man, the whole village goes out to hunt and they take the omens from the animals they get. If they kill a hare it means that the dead man disapproves of his son or brother and that the inheritance must pass out of the family. If they get a male animal it means that the dead Gaita does not want a successor at all. If, however, they shoot a female sambhar, chital or barking-deer, they accept this as meaning that the late Gaita's son or brother may be appointed. Should they fail to get one of these animals, they fast the whole day, cook and eat outside their houses in the evening and sleep away from their wives and go out daily to hunt for three days. If within this period they succeed in shooting one or other of the three female animals required, the new Gaita begins his duties forthwith; otherwise they wait for a year and then repeat the test.

793 Throughout tribal India the influence of the priest is greatly modified by that of the seer. Often these functions are combined in the same person, and 791 his influence is thus greatly increased. But at every ceremony, every festival, in all cases of sickness, at the last rites of the dead, the priests have to consult the prophets for their instructions. There is not, in fact, anything like a definite system of ritual which must always be performed in the same manner. There is rather a great repertory of rites and customs from which many possible combinations can be drawn. The prophet or medium of the gods has to explain

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in each case what kind of worship, what special offerings, what peculiar rites will be acceptable to the god.

These mediums are known in Bastar by the Halbi word Siraha. A Leski is sometimes the Siraha's assistant; sometimes the words are used synonymously. The Siraha does not offer sacrifice, indeed he is not a priest at all; he is simply a medium through whom the gods make known their will. He has the power of falling into trance, of dancing ecstatically and of diagnosing disease and interpreting the divine commands while in this condition. Scores of these men may be seen at any of the great festivals in the State. With their long hair flying wildly about them as they shake their heads, with scourges and whips in their hands and their drunken, drugged, besotted look, they are a distinctive feature of every Muria religious assembly. Yet, in ordinary life, they are completely normal, sensible, hard-working men and no one would suppose that they were capable of such remarkable transformations.

The Gunia, who understands *guni* or magical charms, is simply a medicine-man. He is called in to cure the sick, to recover lost property and to discover the culprit when goods or cattle are stolen. The Panjiyar is a diviner who works by measuring bits of grass which he questions until he obtains the correct answer. The Gunia tends rather to work with a winnowing-fan or a lamp. Both use grain for divination.

Another common form of divination in Bastar is by eggs. Among the Hill Maria, the Kaser-Gaita watches the eggs hatched in his house; if these get addled it may be a sign that the village site should be changed. The Muria test the omens by egg-throwing at the time of breaking stilts.[1] All the Bastar tribes use eggs in worship, and offer them before going out to hunt and fish, 'for they are greatly loved by the gods'.

Eggs are liked by the gods because 'an egg is like a virgin whom no one has touched, or a pregnant woman who holds two souls at once'. A curious tale explains the origin of poultry.

> There was an entirely dark village twelve *kos* long. Once the people went out with a widow's son to search for light. They went a long long way until they lay down weary to sleep. When they awoke they found the sun in the sky. The widow's son declared that he had not slept and had seen a one-legged man put the sun there. The others were jealous that he should have seen this sight and killed him. They divided the flesh among themselves and gave some to the boy's mother, who took it not knowing what it was. She put it aside for him to eat when he should return. But next day, early in the morning as the sun came into the sky, the boy's flesh turned into a cock and began to crow. So when a hen lays an egg it is only a lump of flesh; it is when it hears the cock crow that life comes into it. That is why gods and men love eggs—for they are a sign of strength and life.

For this reason, it is said, gods and ghosts are not often responsible for addling eggs; this is done by human enemies. If a setting of eggs is thus spoilt by black magic, it should be lifted up together with its straw and placed on a piece of an earthen pot. It should be taken to a cross-road, where the priest must say, '*Thu thu, mailotia*, go back to whoever sent you'. He throws away the eggs and the party returns home without looking back. Elsewhere when

[1] Divination by egg-throwing is recorded of the Khasi.—P. R. T. Gurdon, *The Khasis* (London, 1914), pp. 16 and 226ff. In 1942 I found the Juang of Pal Lahara employing the virgin son of the village priest to test the omens, before a festival, by egg-throwing. The use of eggs in worship is widespread in Bastar and Orissa.

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154 The fear of magic is a prominent cause of the few murders committed by Muria in the last ten years. Manga of Kodoli believed that his uncle had
674 caused the death of two of his sons by magic as a sacrifice to the Yer Kanyang of his tank. One day the supposed sorcerer said to him, 'I ate up your sons and now I will devour you', whereon Manga killed him. At the Diwali festival in 1938, Boga killed the Pujari of Katagaon because he was a sorcerer and did not do his worship properly with the result that the crops failed.

In Padnar (Mardapal Pargana)—a village where there is no regular ghotul—a man called Kana suspected a whole family of practising black magic. His accusations were so serious that several of them went to live elsewhere. But one by one they returned, and by Dassera of 1939 they were all back in Padnar. One day during the festival Kana, thoroughly drunk on rice-beer, took the opportunity of telling them they were wizards, accused them of relieving themselves on the village gods, and threatened to turn them out of the village. This drove four men of the suspect family to desperation and they assaulted and killed their enemy.

154 The methods of black magic and the attempts to counter it may be studied in the interesting case of the long struggle for magic supremacy between Gurgu, the Gaita of Almer, and his enemy Singlu. The quarrel started when Singlu, who belonged to the Karanga clan, said to Gurgu, who is a Kaudo, 'I have lived many years in this village. Let me erect *kutukul* here and then my ancestors will live here and help me'. But the Gaita pointed out that the clan-territory (*bhum*) of the Karanga was at Kokori and Singlu should have his menhirs erected there. 'If you bring your gods and ancestors here, our gods will be neglected.' And he refused to give him land.

Singlu began his campaign by making a *kapād*, a magic door, which was represented by cutting wood into three pieces and burying them. The intention of this was that Gurgu's door (symbolizing his house) would be broken and his family ruined. But Gurgu did counter-magic and survived.

Then Singlu cast a spell over Gurgu's speech. Previously Gurgu had prided himself on being able to talk fluently in Halbi with visiting officials, but now he found that he could only talk in Gondi, and there was a general belief that as a result he would be deprived of his position as village headman. But Gurgu 'cured' this also and when I saw him was speaking excellent Halbi-Chattisgarhi.

[787] Singlu's next move was to send a white owl every night to the village. This bird, which is a sort of Ondar Muttai,[1] is very ill-omened. When it cries someone is sure to die. The villagers began to fall ill, but Gurgu managed to 'cure' this also. I was not able to get many details about these 'cures'; I gathered that Gurgu did not perform any symbolic acts of sympathetic magic, but rather by making generous sacrifices obtained the assistance of the local gods. The sacrifices, however, included a doll of dub grass which may have been a means of devoting Singlu to the deity. Gurgu also put nails of iron slag round the village boundary to 'close' it against magic, but as Singlu was already inside this precaution was not of much value.

When I visited Almer, Singlu had recently caused great consternation by taking a hare to the village boundary and sacrificing it to some unknown deity. Now only the Kaser-Gaita may offer such sacrifices and this breach of religious etiquette was believed to have offended the gods greatly, for they drove away all wild animals from before the village hunters. This was the time of the Marka Wijja Pandum, before which the chelik go out on a ceremonial hunt, on the result of which depends the success or failure of the crops. But

[1] See pp. 169f.

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754 Singlu brought disaster this year on the hunt. For a whole month the chelik were taken by Gurgu to the forest, but they got nothing. One day they did shoot a young sambhar but it ran away to another village with their arrows sticking into it, and another village got the meat and the omen. All round other villages were returning triumphant from their hunts, but on 22 April 1941 when I was there the Almer boys returned yet once again empty-handed and Gurgu exclaimed with tears in his eyes, 'I am defeated'.[1]

Here the magician was acting, as it were, at a distance. There is also among the Muria a tradition of the Parat Bagh or were-tiger where a man is metamorphosed into a tiger and attacks his enemy directly. He kills but does not eat him. To become a tiger, a man must go to an ant-hill and circle round it seven times clockwise repeating the necessary charm. It is the charm that matters, and somewhat naturally I have been unable to get hold of it. The man then becomes a tiger, and goes to kill his enemy. When he returns he goes round the ant-hill again, this time anti-clockwise, and is restored to his own shape.

While magicians are very dangerous, but seem to live quite respectably at home, the witch is surrounded in the popular mind with every circumstance of horror and disgust. She goes out naked as a cow; before her go the *mohini*—soothing charms of love—to lull her victims asleep; her spittle is like fire falling to the ground; she drinks the blood of her victims, vomits it and cooks and eats her vomit; she feeds on excrement.

VIII. The Ecstatic Trance

754 How are these evils countered? We have to remember that not all human
791 ills are regarded as of supernatural origin; there are many which are 'natural' and are met by natural remedies. But many other types of disaster are not explicable on natural grounds, and to deal with these the Siraha-medium or
781 the Gunia-diviner is consulted for a proper diagnosis. This diagnosis is generally obtained in trance. The Siraha sits by his patient, some burning coals before him, coughs and belches, and shakes his head till his whole body is in motion with rapid rhythmic movements. These gradually increase in violence, the hair streams out and is thrown to and fro, saliva trickles from the mouth and the tongue protrudes. After a time, the medium gives a loud cry and falls forward, placing the palms of his hands on the burning coals. The smoke curls up between his fingers. He then sits back on his heels, and his companion asks him questions; it is believed that now the god speaks through his lips and the questioner will hear the truth of his perplexities.

791 These mediums also prophesy in a general way at festivals, when they play and posture with a complete forgetfulness of the outside world. Some of them
781 scourge themselves violently with iron chains, others catch hold of the symbol of a god and rush violently about with it, others roll in the dust, hurl themselves on the ground, sit on the spiked seat of a swing, turn somersaults, or simply jog up and down on their toes for lengthy periods.

[1] There was a similar war between a sorcerer and a whole village which he reduced to terror at Sulanga in 1938. Sonu Muria, an ex-convict and a quarrelsome, angry man, was the Pujari of Bhatti Pen. To quarrel with Sonu meant, almost as a matter of routine, that someone would die in your house. From this cause Jaggu, a Halba, lost two of his sons on one day and left the village. Another Halba, Jubi, lost three members of his family in a year. Sonu had a row with a settlement of Ganda: several died: and they all migrated. The Muria and Halba of Sulanga took the matter to the police and urged that the Angs should be sent from Jagdalpur for their protection.

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When these mediums carry a clan-god or the litter of a Matal (Village Mother) on their shoulders, they seem to act quite involuntarily and in an astonishing unison. I have seen four men bearing an Anga perform the most complicated evolutions, twisting and turning in every direction, and all in

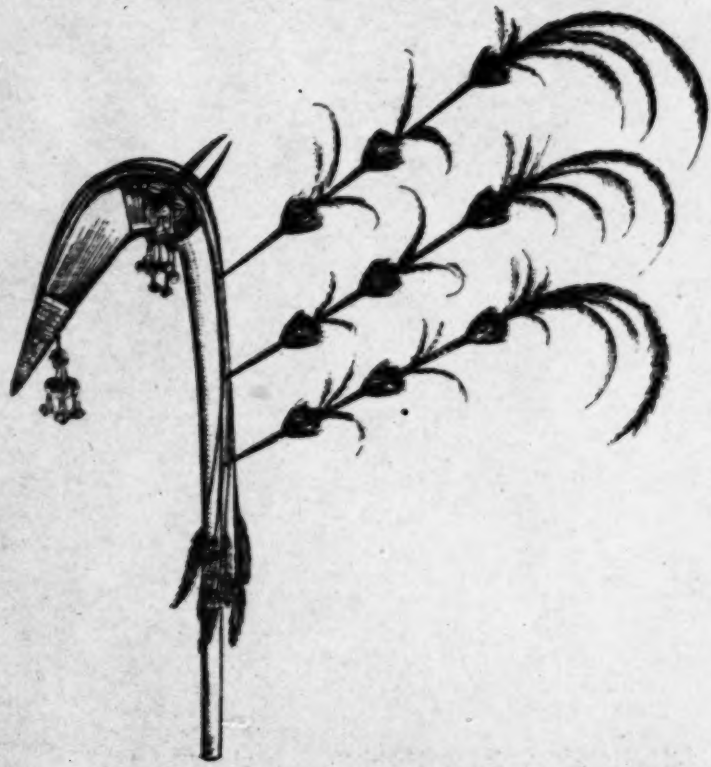

FIG. 27. Decorated wooden 'horse', with horns of the barking deer, used for ceremonial dances
Length of wooden section 3' 4"

unison without a word of command or hint where they are to go next. It is little wonder that the Muria place implicit faith in the movements of these men and accept the divinations of the Anga as final.

What is the explanation of this trance? It is well known that in the condition of 'ligature', as Pratt observes, the 'voluntary control of the muscles is

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considerably weakened and the sensations become very dull and dim. The higher centres of the brain seem to be partially split off from the incoming sensory currents, on the one hand, and from the motor centres, on the other'.[1] At the same time, the mental state becomes more and more simple and the many objects of normal consciousness gradually tend to give way to a state of monoideism. These mediums are undoubtedly out of their wits; they can hurl themselves about and fall with a force that would injure men in an ordinary state of consciousness.[2]

It is interesting to find that in Bastar as elsewhere throughout the world this ecstatic condition is associated with the horse. 'It is not only in Java and Bali', writes Beryl de Zoëte, 'that the hobby-horse is associated with trance. The wonderful Roumanian Calusari, the little horsemen, the Good Fairies who dramatically fight the Wicked One in their ecstatic dance, have as one of their principal functions the exorcism of evil spirits who bring disease, just like the Koeda Kepand (rattan horses) of Java and the Sanghyang Djaran of Bali. And this function is exercised through an abnormal state of consciousness which at a certain degree of intensity we call trance, and in some cases through the medium of a wooden or rattan horse, or merely the head and tail of a horse united by some kind of rod . . . Perhaps there is no continent in which the hobby-horse is unknown. In England he seems innocent enough, ambling along among the mysterious antlered figures of Abbot's Bromley, or through many a French folk-dance.'[3]

The horse has long been used in magic. Tacitus and Camden referred to augury by the horse in the ancient world. It has been said that the Wooden Horse of Troy was 'an instrument of magic rather than military tactics'.[4] Armed horsemen in Arabia in more recent times are quoted as riding round the tent in which a child is to be born and showing clearly by their arms, horses and movements that they are trying to frighten away evil spirits at a vitally important time.[5] In India the worship of the horse has been recorded for certain aboriginal tribes. For example, Hislop says that throughout the Nagpur District at his time (*circa* 1860) everyone worshipped Koda Pen, and a god named Kola Sur was worshipped with an offering of earthen horses on the top of a hill near Great Ambora.[6] The mare-headed goddess, Basali, represented with a horse's head or as a wooden horse, is worshipped by the Keots and allied tribes in Orissa.[7] The Bhil represent their dead as riding on

[1] J. B. Pratt, *The Religious Consciousness* (New York, 1923), p. 424.

[2] With the Bastar trance we may compare the 'jerks' which have been described by a contemporary in a revival in South Carolina in 1803. Persons would 'suddenly fall to the ground, and become strangely convulsed with what was called the jerks; the head and neck, and sometimes the body also, moving backwards and forwards with spasmodic violence, and so rapidly that the plaited hair of a woman's head might be heard to crack . . And then there was the jumping exercise in which several persons might be seen standing perfectly erect, and springing upward without seeming to bend a joint of their bodies.' —N. I. White, *American Negro Folk-songs* (Harvard, 1928), p. 43, quoting Bishop Capers. This would be a good description of the Muria trance.

[3] W. Spies and B. de Zoëte, *Dance and Drama in Bali* (London, 1938), p. 78.

[4] W. F. J. Knight, 'Myth and Legend of Troy' in *Folk-Lore*, Vol. XLVI, p. 98, who cites L. Malten in *Jarkb. d. deutsch. arch. Inst.*, Vol. XIX (1915), pp. 179ff. as authority for 'the dangerous and demoniac associations of the horse in early times'.

[5] Ibid., p. 109.

[6] Hislop, op. cit., Part IV, p. iii. See also V. Ball, *Jungle Life in India* (London, 1880), p. 23.

[7] P. Sen, 'A Basali Folk-Song', *Man in India*, Vol. XII, pp. 175ff. and S. C. Mitra, 'On a Curious Cult of Orissa', *JASB*, Vol. XXX, p. 19.

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825 171 Garo at their great annual festival of the ingathering of the harvest called the *Wangala* or *Gurusala*. At the climax of the Gond-Pardhan ceremony of the Laru Kaj in Mandla the 'horses of the god' perform an ecstatic dance.[1]

This custom of making horses to dance with may be compared to that of the Buryat shamans of Baikal (Siberia) who use horse-staves made of wood or iron, the upper part being bent with a horse-head carved on it, while the middle part of the stick forms the knee-joints of the horse, and the lower end is fashioned into a hoof. Bells are tied to the horse-staves and 'to make it look more realistic' miniature stirrups are added. They represent the horses on which the shaman rides to the Upper and Lower Worlds. In its power of inducing trance the horse-stave appears to be connected with the drum which is often covered with horse-hide.[2]

825 532 787 791 I have noticed very similar customs among the Muria. Lingo Pen has two horses always kept in his shrine at Semurgaon. These are decorated roots of trees which have been chosen because their shape resembles that of a horse's head. At the festivals of the god, these 'horses' are carried about by the mediums and are used both for divination and to stimulate trance. Decorated staves representing horses are carried by many of the chelik when they attend the clan festivals in the Abujhmar foot-hills. In one village, Kanher, members of the Gandu sept have a special relation with the wooden horse of Bara Pen. At Metawand I watched for several hours the antics of a medium who was carrying on his shoulders the wooden horse of his clan-god and at Bandopal a medium carrying an imaginary horse on his shoulder 'ambled, caracoled, pranced and plunged' for two miles before my slow-moving car as we made our way into the jungle for the Marka Pandum. 'The god rides upon him', they told me, 'and he cannot stop dancing for days at a time.' At a wedding in Malakot, I saw a medium riding on a characteristic hobby-horse; and again in the Dhurwa country to the south, I saw a man dancing astride a similar wooden hobby-horse. In both cases the rider would fall into trance if anything went wrong with the proceedings and would be able to diagnose the supernatural cause of the trouble.

This association of the horse with trance may be due to the dignity and beauty of the animal or to its swiftness, or possibly because it is regarded as a fertility offerings symbol.

'Three experiences', says Campbell, 'combine to make the horse a leading guard against the Evil Eye. To horse-owning peoples, his willing strength, intelligence, spirit and devotion make the horse the guardian of the higher or self-sacrificing type. Among tribes to whom the horse is strange, his size, power and fury make him a friend requiring and rewarding the process of squaring. To all who have dealings with the horse, his nervousness, his delicacy, his liability to strange sweatings and other sudden sicknesses shew that the horse is a favourite home for spirit-influence.'[3]

IX. The Cure of Disease

155 Where the trouble is sickness, there seems to be what would be regarded elsewhere as a definite element of 'suggestion' in the Siraha's treatment. In December 1940, I was lying very ill in my camp at Metawand. The Pargana

[1] Cf. Shamrao Hivale, 'The Laru Kaj', *Man in India*, Vol. XXIV (1944), p. 122.
[2] M. A. Czaplicka, *Aboriginal Siberia* (Oxford, 1914), p. 224, quoting Agapitoff and Khangaloff.
[3] J. M. Campbell, 'Notes on the Spirit Basis of Belief and Custom', *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XXX (1901), p. 100.

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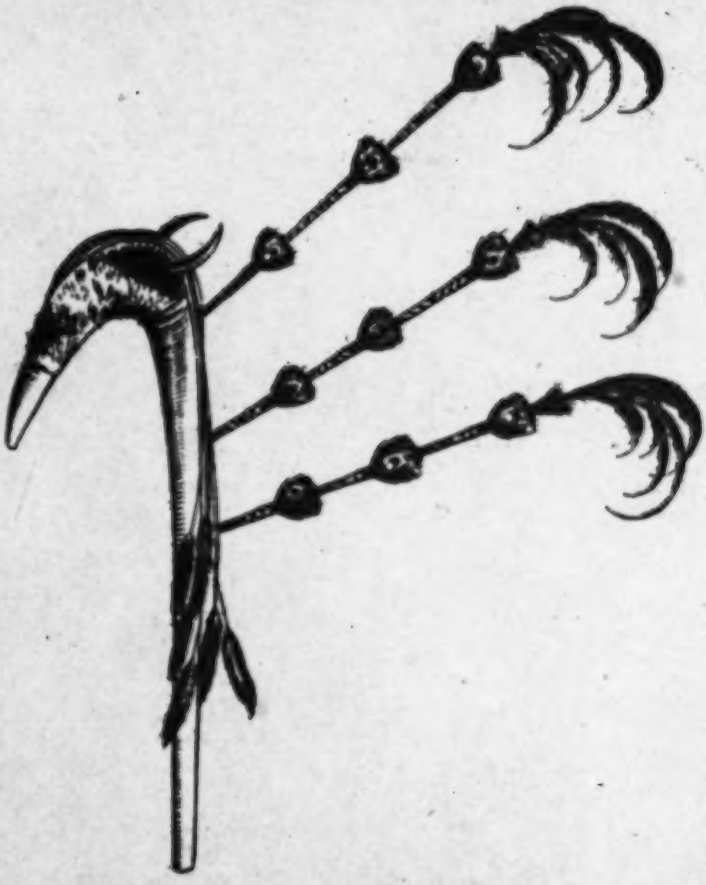
755 Manjhi told me that he knew of an expert Siraha in the neighbourhood, and I determined to try his treatment. I must say that I found it very



[781]

FIG. 92. A wooden 'horse', with horns made of the tusks of the wild boar and decorated with feathers of the peacock and the recket-tailed drongo
Length of wooden section 3' 3"

soothing and comforting. The Siraha paid three visits to my tent. He began with diagnosis, by inducing a state of trance while his assistant, the Manjhi

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755 himself, offered incense on a dish of red-hot coals. When the god came on him, the Siraha fell forward with his hands on the fire, then stood up and came directly to my bed and laid his hands on my head. He bent over me

781

Fig. 30. Wooden horse, attendant on Hunga and Hirme, gods of the Tati clan, at the Bison-horn Maria village of Tikanpal
Length 3'

and blew rice—with which he had filled his mouth—all over my face three times and made passes over my body from head to feet. He clapped his hands and standing upright poured rice on my head.

At the second visit he repeated the process, except that this time he blew twice in my ears. The third time, he again went through the same routine, but brought a garland of flowers which he placed round his neck in the name of the Village Mother. He had previously discovered that the cause of my illness was the Rau of Markabera, where I had just been in camp, so he now brought an egg, a small grass image of myself, and a grass bow-and-arrow on a saja leaf. He waved these over me, and outside the tent offered them to the Rau, picked them up and carried them hastily away into the jungle. As he went he picked a bit of chir grass, broke it and threw it away behind him.

When I recovered, as I did after a few days, I was told that I had been treated in the strictly conventional manner and that no variations had been made for me because I was a stranger. The main points of the treatment are obvious enough—the blowing away of the evil spirit, the lucky rice on the head, the passes down the body to take the illness out into the toes and beyond, the offering of symbols of the patient and carrying them away. Everything was aimed at taking something away from the sick man. At the same time the cause of the disease, in this case a Hill Spirit, had to be amused with the toys and placated by a ceremonial egg.

755 Other methods of diagnosing disease are those common among the aboriginals and even the village Hindus of the Central Provinces—and no doubt elsewhere.
781 I have fully described methods of divination by the measuring-stick and the winnowing-fan in *The Baiga*; the Muria have the same technique.

Divination by rice, by water, and by chickens is, in essence, similar to European table-turning. The Gunia makes a pile of rice in the name of a god. He asks a question and removes a few grains. These he counts—an odd number means yes, an even number no. For each question he has to repeat the process seven times. Another method of augury is to place a small pot of water by the sick man's side. The Gunia makes several piles of rice, one for the sick man, one for witchcraft, one for the gods and so on. He drops a grain from the patient's pile into the water, and then one from the witch's pile. If the witch's grain 'catches' the man's, he declares his disease due to witchcraft. If not, he removes it and tries with a grain from the god's pile. And so on.

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755 To divine by chickens, the Gunia brings a chicken to the piles of rice and
787 tries to make it eat, asking it questions all the time. The point where the chicken eats is, of course, the answer to the question.

In matters of great moment and urgency, the Anga Deo from Bara Dongar may be sent for, but this is expensive and wastes a lot of time.

755 When a diagnosis has been made, steps must be taken to avert the evil. There are many different methods. The most common is the sacrifice of animals, rice, spices and smaller offerings. The village may be protected with bits of iron slag hammered into the doors of houses or round the borders. A scapegoat may be consecrated and driven away into the jungle. If a witch or warlock is discovered, he may be persuaded to undo the damage done. If the cause of disaster is some buried image or bone, it is essential that it should be found and properly destroyed. Often what is called in Hindi a *thus* is performed.

A *thus* is a ceremonial act based on the principles of contagious magic. It aims at concentrating the disease or danger in some material object which it then removes beyond the sphere within which a person can be affected: it takes the evil, for example, outside the village boundary, beyond the patient's *bhum*. Thus the Gunia may get a flea or a pubic hair from the patient, concentrate the disease in it and carry it away. Or to cure fever the Gunia takes one leaf-cup of cold and one of hot water and seven different kinds of flowers. He waves these seven times in front of the patient and throws them away.

A form of treatment recorded in Masora sounds like a combination of suggestion and prayer. To cure a headache on one side of the head, the patient should find a tree with cross-branches, go there on a Sunday, offer rice and pulse to the tree and bang his head seven times against it saying, 'O Mahapurub, be my friend today and drive away my pain'.

751 Medicines may be used, either alone or in association with magical means.
755 Some of the medicines are probably magical in origin, gaining their power from some fancied resemblance to the thing to be cured, such as the prescription of the white milky sap of certain plants to promote lactation. I have
278 recorded the following prescriptions:

For epilepsy. Take the feathers, and in some cases the flesh and bones, of a sparrow and offer them to whatever Rau or ghost is believed to be causing the trouble. At the time of an actual seizure, water in which the feathers have been dipped should be given to the sufferer.

For round-worms. The horn of a bison is scraped with a knife and the scrapings put in water which is allowed to stand for a time. When the water is drunk it is believed that the worms are either vomited or thrown out in the stool.

[833] *For impotence.* The genitalia of a bear are universally believed to be a cure for impotence, and Hindu subordinates and others try to obtain these from the Muria, who do not generally require them themselves. Another cure is to drink the powdered roots of the *toj-rāl* and *bhoj-rāl* plants in milk and abstain from intercourse for a week.

[753] *For dropsy.* This is usually regarded as a sign of the divine displeasure and is a punishment for adultery. It can be cured by the appropriate ceremonies described elsewhere. But the liver of a bear is also useful, if it is found that the disease is due to natural causes.

For venereal disease. This is almost unknown among the Muria. They sometimes confuse gonorrhoea with the burning urine caused by the heat of

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Plate XLVI

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Sirsha prophesying above the dedicated bull

[P. 224 (B)]

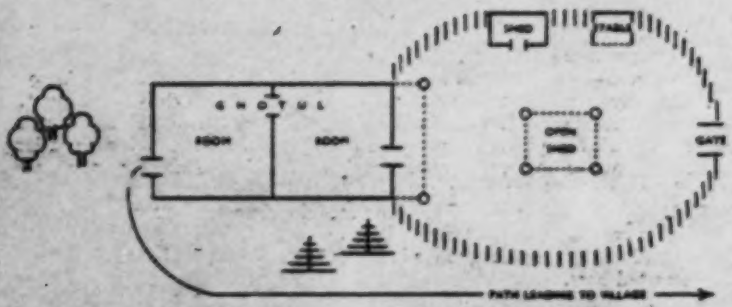
THE GHOTUL BUILDINGS

finely-constructed round roof, and two large houses with thick mud walls. One of these is the Thana-gudi, the other has an inner and an outer room for the boys and girls. The Telenga, Temrugaon and Chureng ghotul are of the same pattern, like Palli Barkot; a big house with a small or deep verandah, a central open hut with often a rounded roof and two small open sheds, the whole surrounded by a high wooden fence.

In the north of the State, on the Amabera plateau and generally to the north of the forest road from Berma to Antagarh and up to the Kanker border are to be found the least attractive ghotul—and ghotul members—in Bastar. The buildings are mean, dilapidated and draughty. The dormitory actually used by the boys and girls rarely has a door and thus loses its intimacy and coziness. My memories of Pupgaon, Chikhli, even Penjori, are not happy.

It remains to mention a few special dormitories. Semurgaon is traditionally the site of the first ghotul, built there by Lingo himself. He could hardly have chosen a lovelier or more charming spot. But the ghotul today is small and almost unique in having unplastered walls made of bare logs. On a pillar in the centre are carvings of chelik and motiari, horses and combs. From the door you look out over a wild expanse of forest and *dippa* clearings.

No visitor to Nayanar can ever forget the ghotul there—the long building with its little windows and two doors, at one end like a hatch, at the other large and dignified, its carved pillars, its charming site at the edge of the village among great trees. This is its general plan—



One of the most delightful and original of all the ghotul is at the Budakasa Para of Malakot. Here outside the village, in the woods, shadowed by tall sago-palms, is a house lifted well above the ground on pillars eight feet high. Above the wooden floor is a low wall two feet high all round, then an open space to the roof. This platform is reached by a ladder. Both the upper room and the space below it are used; there are fires kept burning in each.

The ghotul is built by the chelik themselves, though the boys often get the help of the older men by promising to help in their fields at sowing-time or harvest. The motiari bring grass for the roof, stones and earth for the floor and, when the walls are ready, plaster them with mud. Before they begin the work, the boys mark out on the ground the proposed plan of the building and put there a little pile of rice covered with a leaf-cup. They leave it all night and in the morning go to examine it, sometimes only for one day, sometimes for three days running. Should the rice be scattered, it is taken as a bad omen and they build the ghotul elsewhere. But if the rice remains just

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as it was under its leaf-cup, they proceed to dig holes to take the four corner pillars of the house. If, as they dig, they come across white ants they move the site. They put four pillars into the holes and tie a garland of mango leaves round them. After this they proceed to build in the usual way.

At Phunder the boys put a grass 'top-knot' on the roof and a small flag, the *chakh-bairag* or Palo Pen, so that 'all might know it was a ghotul'.

Such are the main types of building; what of the decorations and the furniture? These vary greatly from place to place. They are least ornate to the north and east, most carefully imagined and executed in the west central parganas, in the typical Jhoria area.

Doors are sometimes very small, sometimes large and heavy, occasionally of light bamboo, sometimes carved as at Bandopal; sometimes there is no door at all. Often there is an arrangement for shutting the door from inside—a latch falls into a wooden hook attached to the door. But it is interesting that there is no means of shutting the house from outside: the ghotul is never locked up. It is a shrine and no one would steal from it.

As you move west across the centre of the Muria country you find more and more elaborate carving. The ghotul has stimulated artistic creation, not only in the realm of personal adornment but also in wall-painting and wood-carving. The chelik desire that their ghotul really should be 'lovely as a bison's horns'. In many of the Jhoria ghotul there are excellently carved pillars. These may be seen at Almer, Nayanar, Remawand, Amgaon, Bandopal, Malinar, Koher and elsewhere. At Almer, one of the pillars has ciddari birds at the top, another has tortoises. On the body of the pillars are carvings of the moon, boys and girls dancing the Hulki, elephants. Down the pillar there are three *pidha*, the seats that are supposed to hold it up. At Amgaon also, each of the pillars has four of these *pidha* 'for the roof to sit on'. At Nayanar, one of the pillars is decorated with tortoises and another has hooded snakes projecting from all four corners. In Malinar, there are carvings on all the pillars—combs beautifully fashioned, a boy with a large phallus, a realistic bow and arrow, a snake. Outside, as at Remawand, there are pillars in the fence with remarkable designs clearly illustrated in Plate LXXII. At Jhakri I saw a fine pillar ingeniously carved to make a wooden ball inside with no way of putting it in or taking it out. At Binjhe too the Sirdar had carved some good pillars and had made windows in the ghotul with serrated bars.

Phallic symbols are very common.[1] In nearly every ghotul there is somewhere the representation of the vagina, often about two feet from the ground

[1] Similar phallic symbols occur in the Juang and Bhuiya and in some Uraon dormitories. The Juang often make a row of hearts right across the main beam of the roof. So do the Kond. Hutton describes carvings of men and women 'in a condition of sexual excitement' in Naga morung.—Hutton, *Diaries*, op. cit., p. 48.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

in 1940-1 were the Salya of Binjhli, the Sirdar of Sidhawand and Malakot, the Hikmi of Almer, the Likhen of Kanhargaon, the Kotwar of Kabonga.

When the old leader, the Sirdar, decides finally to lay down his office, there is a small ceremony for the appointment of his successor. The following is the custom in villages of the Chalka Pargana. The old Sirdar, after giving due notice to the elders of the village and the ghotul members, comes on an appointed day wearing a new turban which he has bought himself, five to eight hands long. The ghotul members collect money in the village and purchase liquor. When everyone has assembled in the ghotul, the elders ask the members, 'Whom do you want for Sirdar?' They give the name of the boy they want and the elders remove the turban from the old Sirdar and tie it round the head of his successor, saying, 'From today the ghotul is in your hands. Whatever you command must be done'. The members reply, 'We will do whatever he says'. Then the elders say, 'Look, boy, these children are in your care. If you take them to another village, yours is the responsibility. When they are sleeping, look to see that every child is there. You may go hungry, but don't let the children starve. When there is a marriage, you must arrange the work. When anyone dies, you must see to it. When a visitor comes, you must arrange wood and water. See that the ghotul is always clean and the children are also clean. For if they are happy, it is your credit; if they are ruined, it is your fault.' At this point, in some villages, the girls present the new Sirdar with a new sleeping-mat; in Binjhli, they give him three rings, which he wears throughout his time of office and returns when he resigns; in Markabera, they give him a leaf-pipe of honour. Finally the girls formally give him his new name, hitting him on the back with clenched fists, and his 'subjects' salute him with Johar and place *tika*-marks of rice on his forehead. They give him liquor to drink, and celebrate his appointment with a dance.

In Khutgaon village, I found that the turban ceremony had been abandoned. Some years ago a dog urinated on it. This was regarded as a very bad omen, and when the Siraha was consulted he declared that they must no more tie the turban on the leader's head nor must the motiari any longer touch the heads of the boys with their combs. The disappearance of old customs is not always due to alien influence.

On 1 November 1941 I was present at Bhanpuri when a new Diwan (as the head of the ghotul is called there) was appointed. The girls and boys assembled shortly after nine for what was called the *Diwali nark*, or eating of parched rice in honour of the Diwali festival. Each member had to bring a contribution to the feast: big boys and girls brought one seer each, somewhat younger children brought half a seer and the little probationers a quarter. The rice was collected on mats spread on the ground in the compound and carefully measured. Part was put aside for the villagers—in fact for the children's own parents; part was allocated to a neighbouring village with whom the ghotul was on friendly terms; the rest was for the present company.

Then the elder boys retired inside the ghotul and deliberated about the appointment of their new Diwan. This was only a formality, since the matter had been settled long before. They came out and declared that they had chosen Gando the Sirkil. The Belosa and Dulosa, the two leading girls, then went to Gando, pulled him to his feet and thumped him hard on the back crying 'Diwan Diwan'. After the Belosa had put a ring on his finger, he went round and saluted everyone with Johar. After a few days he would, he promised, treat them to eight annas' worth of liquor.

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is a part of the regular ceremonial of a festival or marriage; sometimes it is due to 'supernatural' inspiration.[1]

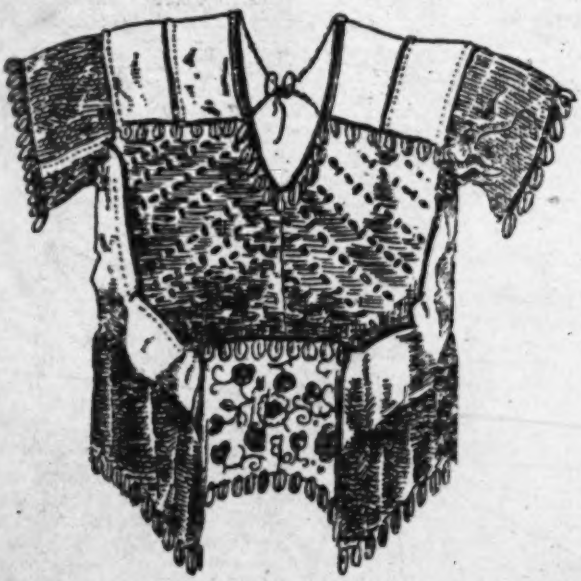

FIG. 115. Lamana woman's jacket adorned with cowries and used by Muria men for the purposes of divination

In Bastar I have noted two forms of this cross-dressing. Men sometimes put on women's jackets adorned with cowries when they go to prophesy in trance before a god and reveal his will to their fellows. At the bigger clan-festivals you may see a dozen or more mediums dancing and gesticulating in a state of ecstatic excitement, all wearing round their bodies these gaily-coloured and rather incongruous blouses.

But this is the only occasion, I think, where the male aboriginals of Bastar put on women's dress. It is more common for women to dress up as men. Bison-horn Maria women of Dantewara sometimes put on male garments at the great Wijja Pandum and drive their men-folk out to the hunt which precedes the main business of the festival. The Muria have the same custom, and the unmarried girls, dressed up as boys, dismiss the men of the tribe for a ceremonial hunt on the success of which will depend the value of the annual harvest.[2]

[1] For the 'Change of Sex' motif in Indian fiction, see Penzer, op. cit., Vol. VII, pp. 231ff. and W. N. Brown, 'Change of Sex as a Hindu Story Motif' in *JAOS*, Vol. XLVII (1927), pp. 1ff.

[2] Thurston speaks of a similar custom among the Koyi, where the women 'dressed in their lords' clothes' drive the men out to hunt at the Bhudevi Pandaga or Festival of the Earth Goddess. He describes a procession held before such a hunt: 'About the middle of the day, we saw a procession approaching as on the previous day, but it consisted entirely of women, the drummers and swordsmen being women dressed up as

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Another tale, from Atargaon, points the same moral.

> Dream and Wealth were disputing which was the greater. When they could not agree they decided that each should hide in turn and whoever could find the other, yet not be found himself, would win the contest. Wealth hid himself first. He took the shape of a pot of rupees and hid in an ant-hill. Dream went to a very poor boy who was lying asleep and called his soul to come out. When the *jiwa* came Dream sent it to the ant-hill. It returned, and when the boy awoke he went to the ant-hill and dug up Wealth in the shape of the pot. Then Dream hid in the wind, and was blown here and there about the world. Wealth could not find him and when they met again he admitted that Dream was the greater.

In this other world into which the *jiwa* can enter during sleep, the gods and the Departed are familiar figures and the *jiwa* can talk with them and learn their will. Often, however, the Muria speak as though the gods and the dead had come to them in sleep, that the approach was, as it were, from the other side. Obviously the ordinary Muria, any more than the ordinary Englishman, has no consistent theory. One thing which has puzzled him, and which he explains by a fantastic tale, is the 'falsity' or symbolism of dreams. In Berma I was given a story which accounts for this.

> Long ago men could read the future in their dreams. An owl heard of it and said, 'If men can see the future in dreams, they will never die'. The owl waited till the gods were holding a darbar and then fell with a bang into the midst of them. The gods said, 'What is the matter?' The owl replied, 'I have had a dream, and in that dream I was marrying a Raja's daughter. We had done eleven rounds of the Lagir; had it been twelve she had been mine; but I awoke and fell to the ground. Now I must marry this girl. What am I to do?' The gods were concerned and said to one another, 'How can a red-eyed bird marry a Raja's daughter?' The owl replied, 'But all the world gets what it sees in dreams; how can it be that only my dreams are false?' At that the gods cursed men saying, 'From now on, let all dreams be false'.

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Dreams, therefore, are symbolic. They are code messages from the other world and only the wise can decipher them. There is a fairly extensive system of dream-interpretation, on the whole consistently maintained throughout the Muria area, though with a few variations from place to place. I will tabulate these interpretations for the reader's convenience.

787

	Good Dreams
One's dead parents ..	.. Lucky, for it shows they have retained their affection for one.
Drowning in a river ..	.. Very good. The Yer Kanyang so loves the dreamer that she wants to marry him.

Sir J. G. Frazer, *Taboo and Perils of the Soul*, pp. 37 and 49; *Panjab Notes and Queries*, Vol. III, p. 166 (which gives a tale with a similar motif to that in the text); W. A. Clouston, *Popular Tales and Fictions* (Edinburgh, 1887), Vol. I, p. 437.

For a Santal story of a soul which slipped out of a man's sleeping body in the form of a lizard and was prevented from returning, see B. Bonnerjea, 'The Social and Ceremonial Life of the Santals', *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. LIX (1930), p. 100.

DREAMS

Sinking under water ..	.. When seen by a man, means his wife is pregnant and will bear a son.
A river in flood ..	.. When seen by a woman, means her period will begin next day. Seen by a man it warns him that his wife's period is about to begin.
A boat	.. A long journey. A good omen.
An Anga (clan-god) ..	.. Lucky.
An elephant ..	.. Good. A symbol of prosperity.
A bear	.. Good. A potency symbol.
People quarrelling ..	.. Good, for since dreams go by contraries no one will actually quarrel.
A kotri fish	.. The dreamer will get money.
Drinking liquor ..	.. The dreamer will get meat to eat in two or four days.
Eating mangoes under a tree	.. The dreamer will get meat the next day.

Bad Dreams

A motiari	.. A Kanyang will attack you.
A horse	.. A horse is a spirit or Rau, and the dream is therefore bad.
People fighting ..	.. Black magic is in the air.
Fire	.. Someone will die in the house.
A tiger	.. The dreamer will be hungry, or a witch is plotting to attack him.
Anything burning ..	.. Unlucky.
A fire	.. Black magic.
Climbing a tree ..	.. Bad.
Falling	.. Certain death.
Flying in the air ..	.. Certain death.
Rain	.. The dreamer will weep.
A bullock-cart laden with wood	.. Someone will be carried on wood to his grave.
A cot	.. Someone will be carried on a cot to his grave.
A pile of rice ..	.. The dreamer will fall ill.
A sago-palm	.. Someone will be burnt to death.
Raw meat	.. Witchcraft.
A marriage	.. Death.
To lose one's teeth ..	.. Unlucky.
Excrement	.. Unlucky.
Fish	.. Dropsy.
Taking one's plough to a field	.. Black magic—a member of the family will fall ill.

But these interpretations are not universally given. Thus, in Palli (Kondagaon), Badgai, round Parakot and in Kolibera, the tiger dream is unlucky: in Gorma and Markabera it is good, a 'light dream'. And to see a bear is believed in Gorma and Markabera to be a 'dark dream' after which nothing will succeed, though in Alor it is very good, and in Badgai it simply means that you are going to meet some old man like your dead father. A marriage dream is held to be unlucky in Palli and lucky in Kolibera. Falling

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• 787 from a tree is very bad at Kokori and Gorma, but good elsewhere, though it is always bad to dream of climbing.

The reason for this divergence may be that in some cases dream-interpretation does not depend on any manifest or latent symbolism, but has been worked out pragmatically: a marriage dream did in fact one day precede a death at Palli or luck in the hunt at Koilibera, and ever afterwards it has been associated with failure or success.

The interpretations are in any case not very clear. The association of fish with dropsy is interesting, so is that of flying with evil spirits and of raw meat with witches. But I cannot see the connexion between a kotri fish and money, or liquor and meat, or a tiger and hunger. It is remarkable, in view of the hobby-horse dances,[1] that the horse should be regarded as a spirit and so unlucky.

These interpretations are taken quite seriously and often guide a man's conduct. The chelik may refuse to go on a Pus Kolang expedition if one of them has a dream of a tiger shortly before they set out. A motiari will be wise if she avoids visiting the ghotul the day after she has dreamt of a river in flood, for this suggests that her menstrual period is imminent.

We must turn now to the official or standardized dream by which the Muria receive communications from the gods and the Departed. Muria social life is, as we have just seen, sometimes guided by a chance dream of a prophetic nature. But the religious and disciplinary side of its life is almost dominated by such dreams. When a god, for example, feels that he is neglected or forgotten he may draw attention to himself either by bringing disease upon a village or by sending dreams. The god does not always come in his own form, but symbolically. For example, a neglected Kanyang may appear as a motiari and will continue to bother the sleeper until offerings are made to her. The Yer Kanyang may appear as a crocodile. If the crocodile seizes you in a dream and you do nothing about it, you will fall ill. To prevent this the dreamer calls the Siraha and goes with him to the river to offer egg-shell ground up with burnt earth from below a hearth, vermilion for the naiad's forehead, bangles for her arms, and coloured wool for her hair.

Dreaming of a horse means that a Rau (or forest-god) is angry, and eggs and parched rice must be offered to him. In Dongrigura the Gaita said that the dream of a horse, buffalo, pig or peacock meant that a Rau was dissatisfied with the attention he was getting. If the Rau appeared in the form of a horse or a buffalo, it was necessary to make an iron image of the animal and offer it to him. For a pig or peacock, however, the sacrifice of a pigeon was sufficient. At Sirsi, if a man dreams that he is caught by a tiger, this is supposed to indicate the displeasure of the Earth Mother and two or three days afterwards the villagers have to assemble and sacrifice a chicken in her honour.

Such dreams represent the whims or spleen of deities according to their mood. More important instructions are given by the clan-gods with regard to the construction of the Anga. As far as I know, every Anga is made or repaired as a result of a dream. For example, at Karanji, there was an Anga of Bara Deo, but no sacrifice was being made to it in 1942 because the Pen-Gaita, Ghenwa, was dead and the god had not yet come in a dream to appoint his successor. The Duma-guru (ancestral-priest) also had failed to appear. In this village it is the custom for Bara Deo to come in a dream saying that offerings are to be made and the Duma-guru directs the place and time. At

[1] See pp. 207ff.

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Chandabera the headman of the village had a dream in which Danteshwari Matal appeared to him and told him to cut down a large sarai tree which was obstructing her worship. This tree pleasantly shadowed Danteshwari's own shrine, and the headman thought it was unnecessary to remove it. Later his leg became swollen and the Siraha declared that the reason was his failure to obey the goddess. Even so he took no notice, but when a little later his brother had a fit of madness, he thought it best to obey his dream and cut down the tree. At Padbera, the god Phande Hunga (a grandson of Halayin Dokari) gave a dream to the Gaita of the Durro clan, promising to make him prosper if he would make him an Anga. The dream even showed that mahua wood was to be used and that it must be brought from the Magagaon forest.

The appointment of a Gaita or Gunia often depends upon appropriate dreams. Succession to the priesthood is hereditary, but until the Gaita's son or grandson gets a dream he cannot take up his appointment. In the meantime, somebody else has to perform his functions in his name. The Gaita of Randhna, for example, described how 'six months before I had my dream my father died. Then I dreamt that I went to the bazaar and drank a lot of liquor. As I was coming home, I met Matal Maoli and Danteshwari who said, "Your ancestors served us and never made mistakes; we were pleased with them and never gave them trouble; now you are their son and you are to serve us. Do your work well and whatever you ask we will listen and answer your questions". I awoke frightened but there was no one there. From that day onwards I was the village Gaita.' Once in Alor, when there was extensive crop failure, the Siraha dreamt that the office of Kaser-Gaita should be abolished. In his place one of the Siraha dreamt continually everything that had to be done.

The dead also reveal their wishes through dreams. Sometimes they indicate that they are dissatisfied with the attention that is being paid them. For example, a Muria of Bhopna said, 'If I dream of a tiger rushing to attack me, I recognize it as a Dand-duma, a troublesome ghost. To prevent the danger I must pound up a bit of living coal, take some burnt earth and draw two parallel lines on the ground. I offer a chicken there and throw it away.' In Sirsi the Muria said that a man regards any dream of his dead parents as requiring some sacrifice. It is supposed that the dead appear in a dream if they are intending to cause trouble later on. The dream is a preliminary warning to the living to be careful. The dreamer offers an egg and a chicken saying, 'Since you have come in my dream, I am giving you these things; be content with them and give us no trouble'.

To dream of drowning is a very significant dream that demands instant attention. I describe elsewhere how the Muria believe that adultery is punished by an attack of dropsy. To dream of drowning with its association with water, therefore, means that among your ancestors was an adulterer who died of watery swelling of his body and that the full rites of satisfaction for his crime have not yet been performed.

At Gorma, a Muria dreamt that he was drowning. When he consulted a medium about this, he was reminded of an association with water that had occurred in his family: one of his ancestors had in fact died of dropsy as a penalty for adultery. 'His spirit is uneasy, so he has given you this dream.' To quiet the ghost, the villagers made a man's image of grass and took it to the river. They put it beside a stone with one of its feet upon it, and the Gaita and the ghost's living relatives also put their feet on the stone and made the usual offerings and drank to the honour of the dead. After this there were no more dreams.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

•787 Not only religious functions and duties are revealed in dreams. In Alor a chelik said that he sometimes dreamt the songs and dances that were to be performed on the morrow. Another chelik in Nayanar said that he dreamt once that he was able to do a new kind of dance and sing a song that he had never been able to learn in fact.' After his dream he found that he could do both. At Kabonga, the Village Mother sometimes comes in a dream to tell the boys to dance, and next day they go to a neighbouring village and perform the Hulki.

154 Of the dreams recorded from chelik and motiari the majority were frankly sexual in their manifest content. This was perhaps what was to be expected; although the ghotul is hardly a home of repressed wishes there are some which from time to time pass through periods of stress and tension, and there are boys and girls in both types of ghotul who suffer the frustration of their desires. But where among ourselves such desires express themselves in discreet symbolism, the ghotul's frank and open attitude to sex permits the censor mechanism to lie unused. The most common ghotul dreams are those of 'eating, playing, dancing and sexual congress'.

A very interesting series of dreams were recorded for me by my wife from two motiari in the Binjhli ghotul. At that time (December 1940) this ghotul, which is one of those which does not permit permanent attachments, was passing through a difficult phase. There were about a dozen girls of eighteen years or more who were for various reasons unable to get married; they had been in the ghotul for a long time; young and beautiful motiari were growing up and diverting the attention of the chelik. Angry scenes between the motiari were not uncommon and some of the older girls were restless and unhappy. Such was the situation in which two of the senior motiari had the following dreams. I will give first those of the head girl of the ghotul, a motiari of about nineteen years.

> I dreamt that I was sleeping with a chelik I love. I have often wept as I remembered the dream.
>
> I have often dreamt that I was married.
>
> On a dancing expedition I borrowed all the combs of a young and beautiful motiari.
>
> I dreamt I was sleeping with the chelik I loved. He combed my hair. The next morning he gave me eight combs, for he saw I hadn't any.

And these are the dreams of her assistant, a motiari perhaps seventeen years old, a pretty girl.

> I dreamt that I was sleeping with a chelik outside the ghotul. We were caught and I was fined three bottles of liquor.
>
> I dreamt that I was sleeping with a chelik on separate mats side by side. I held him in my hands all night. He never took his hands off my breast.
>
> I often dream of intercourse. When the boy approaches me I say, 'Hush, what's the matter with you?'
>
> A chelik slept with me in my dream. He held my breasts tightly in his hands. I said, 'Don't do that, let me go'. He said, 'How can I help it? I always do it'. I said, 'You chelik have no mercy on us'.

In the Binjhli ghotul, the motiari sleep with their chelik only once a week. On other days, after an evening of strong sexual stimulation, the girls return to their separate house. Several of these dreams appear to show the influence of this. The longing for combs revealed in the first set of dreams and the obvious jealousy of the young girl who had many of them, reflects a common

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your mat to sleep on'. So I had to get up and give him the mat on which we were sleeping together. I was very sorry, but when I came back, she took off her sari and spread it for me to lie on, and I covered her with my blanket. 154

In Markabera the head of the chelik said, 'If my ghotul-wife is away, I dream of sleeping with her. I chase her and often have her'. He sometimes experienced orgasm during such dreams. 'I once dreamt that I was going to dance in another village. I walked along the road with a girl I had always wanted. That night I was able to sleep with her in the other village.'

A chelik at Chandabera said, 'We generally dream of our earliest loves in the ghotul, for these are girls whom we never forget. We dream that they are sleeping by our side or running away from us. Sometimes we dream that we have gone out fishing with them or that we are on our way to a marriage dance'.

The seriousness with which the Muria treat their dreams and the reality they ascribe to them is clearly shown in the precautions taken the following day. I have already referred to various cures for nightmare. I will add a few more. At Bhopna a Muria said, 'If I dream that I have gone down under the water, I consult the Siraha and he says that it means that an evil ghost is coming. This once happened to me, so I got seven different kinds of wood and made a bonfire of them by the bank of a stream. I put some gur and ghee on the fire. Then I and my wife went round it three times, entered the water and ducked below it. We took off our old clothes and left them there on the bank, dressed in new clothes and went home without looking round.' This was rather a drastic and expensive cure. An easier means of averting the possible danger of a dream is this from Chingnar: 787 ● 782

> A dream of a fight between two people suggests danger from black magic. To avert this the figure of a man with a bow and arrow should be made with grass and a bad egg, a pig or a chicken should be offered to it. The little image should be thrown away outside the village and the danger will disappear. [754]

Gadru of Chaniyagaon once dreamt,

> A beautiful woman came to my children and said to them, 'I am going to devour you, because your parents give me nothing to eat'. The next day my children fell ill, and the Siraha declared that their sickness was due to Lagar Deo, who was angry because the customary offering to him three years after the first child had not been made, and he therefore wanted to kill all my children. So I dedicated two pigs to Lagar Deo to be allowed to wander freely and killed three years later. Once I had done this my children recovered. 787 753 782

At Palnar, the Suel once dreamt that he was climbing up a huge stone. Suddenly he saw a chaprasi, he was frightened and tried to run away. He fell down and broke his teeth. When he awoke he found he had fever and only recovered after he had sacrificed a pig and made other offerings.

In Chandabera, a Muria jealous of the happiness of the chelik performed hostile magic against the ghotul. The Sirdar dreamt that one of the boys had died and his corpse was being carried away for burial. Soon afterwards he himself got an attack of fever. He was sleeping at home and dreamt that a chelik came to him saying, 'Come, let us go to dance at a wedding'. The Sirdar replied, 'I am suffering from fever and cannot go'. The chelik said, 'The fever has been sent you by such and such a person, you must drive it

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787 back again'. Then the boy awoke and the following day sent for the Siraha, who agreed that his illness was due to magic. They then took a pig and
753 chicken outside the village and sacrificed them saying, 'Are you going away
782 or not?' Both pig and chicken ate the rice offered them, and this was taken to mean that the danger from the magic was averted. The boys feasted on the pig and chicken and the Sirdar recovered from his fever. It was generally believed that the chelik who visited him in his dream was Lingo Pen himself.

Naitami Dole, a Muria of Kokori, described an experience when he was the Sirdar of his ghotul.

> One night I dreamt that I was having intercourse with a motiari. The next morning I found myself suffering from fever, so I called the Siraha to ask what was the matter. He told me that an enemy had sent the motiari to me by his magic. So I went down to the bank of the river and made seven circles on the bank putting rice, powdered egg-shells and ashes in them with an egg in the middle circle for the Yer Kanyang. Then I recovered.

787 To see one's house burning in a dream means that black magic, particularly in its very dangerous form of the *aginbaṇ*, or arrow of fire, is going to be sent
754 against one. To avert it a chicken should be sacrificed and a small image made of *dab* grass carried out across the village boundary and thrown away.

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THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

II. The Pus Kolang Expeditions

The Pus Kolang expeditions undertaken by boys during the Hindu month of Pus (Jan.-Feb.) are among the more serious of the ghotul's annual diversions. Attired in special costume, the chelik visit a number of villages, dancing and singing in honour of Lingo Pen, who is said to have inaugurated the custom. Their behaviour is strictly regulated by rules and taboos; they carry a god with them and sacred fire. Unlike the girls' Diwali dance, there is no sexual purpose behind these expeditions; indeed the strictest taboos are enforced and there is a general sense of danger; everyone has to be very careful; breach of the rules earns catastrophic punishment. 'The dances are for the gods', said the boys at Phulpur. 'We don't feel inclined for girls; besides, many have died for sex at the Pus Kolang.'

This sense of danger probably accounts for the rather haphazard distribution of the custom. In Udanpur, for example, Kurumtalla Pen ordered the chelik not to dance, but they disobeyed; as they left their village, one of the boys died. In Chiyanar, the boys' dog once bit another dog and when they got home a chelik died. In Bhanpuri, the dancers were once warned by a tiger's print in the ashes of the Pus Kolang fire not to go, but they went and a pair of chelik died. Since then they have abandoned the custom altogether. Generally, south of the Narayanpur-Kondagaon road and east of the Keskal-Kondagaon road the Muria do not dance the Pus Kolang, but everywhere in the north it is common. In the Chota Dongar area they say, 'We don't dance it because we are really Maria'. It is significant that in this part the cult of Lingo is at its weakest.

As the cool refreshing season of Pus approaches, the ghotul leaders consult the Gaita about the time and direction of the expedition. They remember the villages where they were well entertained last year; they recall the food they were given and the omens they saw, and they draw up a programme. In the dark half of Pus, they begin to practise. The dances are difficult and must be carefully taught to the younger boys, for it is dangerous to make mistakes. The chelik prepare their clothes, masks and toys. For weeks they study the rhythm of the sticks and the movements of their feet, but always outside the fence of the ghotul compound.

On the first day of the time decided, the chelik light a fire and dance round it. In the morning they examine the ashes; if these are undisturbed or if they are marked by panther, dog or bullock, all is well; if there is the footprint of a man, tiger, cat or hen, it means that Lingo is warning them not to go. In some villages, however, the ashes should not be disturbed at all. Any mark is regarded as a warning. The boys consult the Siraha, who sometimes forbids the expedition altogether and sometimes allows it on certain conditions. The next day they look again, and again on the third day. If for three days the ashes are well-omened they accept the signs and prepare to go.

During this period they have been deciding who are to be the Gain and Jokta, the leaders of the singing; how they are to pair off; they have been getting their clothes and *Lingo-singār* (ornaments) into order. These clothes and ornaments include feminine elements: the boys wear skirts and many necklaces and neck-bands borrowed from the motiari, but I do not think this involves any element of cross-dressing—it is simply due to a desire to be as ornamental as possible.

When Lingo led the chelik on the first Pus Kolang expedition, he took a tiger with him. In memory of this the boys in many villages now take a dog,

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and for this reason the dance is sometimes known as Nei Kolang or Kukur Kolang.

At Phulpar the chelik said that they took with them whatever dog wandered round their fire and sat down near its ashes, but in other villages I have been told that they only take a dog which is carefully trained, for it is essential that it should not bark or bite or have anything to do with other dogs. In Udanpur they said that the dog was taught to dance.

The dog serves both as a mascot and to take the omens. The boys remove a bell from the shrine of the Village Mother and tie it round its neck in the name of Lingo. When they dance in a circle the dog must sit in the middle. At meal-times, the Gain gives it three handfuls of rice before anybody else is fed.

When the dancing party enters a village the chelik wait to see what the dog will do. If all is well, it sits down quietly and they stay. If it wanders off into the village and enters someone's house, it means that a pair of boys will die. If it runs out into the fields even late in the evening, it is a sign that they must move on at once. If it fights with another dog, someone will die. Should the dog leave the party and return home, it is taken as a warning of great danger.

FIG. 117. Ornamental stick carried on dancing expeditions
Full length 2' 7½"

When the chelik return to their village they sacrifice two chickens for the dog, though a boy has to be content with one, and they place stones for it on a cairn. They remove the bell from its neck and replace it in the shrine of the Village Mother. From the time the bell is tied round the dog's neck to the time it is removed, no member of the party may have sexual intercourse. But once the bell is removed, it is a sign that they are free.

In most villages the same dog accompanies the party for three years running, but at the end of that period it is expected to go mad or to be carried away by a tiger. The theory is that for three years Lingo 'possesses' the dog for the brief period of the expedition, but at the end of the time he takes the form of a tiger and carries it away.

When all is ready, about a week before Cherta-puni, the chelik put on their full dress and dance all day. They are rather solemn about this; they talk to no one and take a very superior attitude towards their girls and have nothing to do with them. The next morning, the Gaita takes them to the Village Mother's shrine where the spear of Maria Pen is kept. They dance before the shrine in a straight line, not in a circle; this is the 'Lingo Par'. The Gaita brings fire from his house in a length of smouldering rope spun from paddy-stalk fibre. With the aid of this he offers incense saying, 'These youngsters are going out to dance. Let no disease attack them on the way. Bring them home safely. Let the spear be their aid and Maria Pen go with them. If they return in safety I will give food-sacrifice'. He fixes the smouldering rope on the point of the spear and brings it out.

This was the custom in Phulpar and Kolibera; in the latter village the Gaita went on to the shrine of Thakur Deo and worshipped there with the same

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'as if they were bride and bridegroom' the others said. In another the boys shut the girls in, piling brushwood against the door. In two places the boys were able to steal chickens. One was a Muria chicken, and the owner let it go with a laugh; but the other was taken by way of revenge on a surly Hindu who abused the boys and gave them a stingy contribution of flour. They got the hen and hid it in a basket. The owner followed them round protesting, but he never found it.

From every house the boys took some old basket, broom, bit of matting, broken winnowing-fan, so that by the time they had done their round they looked an extraordinary collection of scarecrows. This, of course, was part of the clearing of the village of disease.

By now the boys had several baskets full of flour and mahua flowers. They took the mahua to the out-still where it was exchanged for liquor, and carried the flour and the two chickens out into the fields. Here they threw down in a corner of the Gaita's field all the rubbish they had collected and their dancing-sticks, and some of them gathered brushwood and a little timber and strewed it over a patch some five yards square.

Other boys brought water and large pipal leaves, and two of them mixed the flour and water and made thin cakes spreading the mixture on one pipal leaf and covering it with another. Then the Sirdar fired the first *parka* of the year with a bit of straw-rope brought from the ghotul fire.

After the wood and rubbish had blazed up, the boys threw three of the mandia-flour cakes into the ashes as an offering to the Kis Kanyang (Fire Maiden) and placed the others in the embers to cook. The Gaita offered the two chickens to the Earth. All looked eagerly to see how the bodies fell; if they fall on one side it is a good omen, if downward, bad. Today one omen was bad. The Gaita sat by the fire with chelik on either side, and offered liquor to the spirits of the dead Gaita of the village, praying, 'Give us good wind and no rain when we fire the *parka*; give us sound sleep in the ghotul with our motiari, and let them not conceive'.

•[187]

Then they all drank. The leaves were pulled out of the fire, the bread was distributed and little bits of roast chicken. I got one of the chickens' heads and a bit of bread. Now this was done, the villagers could cut and fire their *parka*. After the rains began, the Gaita would sow in this spot and after him the other villagers.

In Khutgaon and the villages of that area, this festival does not seem to be kept, but on the eve of the day that they decide to cut the wood for the *parka* or *dippa*, the Gaita sleeps in the ghotul to ensure that all are chaste. After the usual offerings in the village temples, he takes the people to the forest. As the chelik cut the wood they cry *Kiddari pada!* upon which the Gaita says to the other villagers who sit watching, 'Give them something to eat'. They have brought pots with burnt rice at the bottom, water and gourds. They chase the chelik, catch them, smear their faces with black soot from the pots and give them each a little burnt rice to eat. If there is any left it is taken to the ghotul and the motiari are similarly treated in the evening.

The *beharani* ceremonies for the protection of the village must not ignore the ghotul, though theoretically such rites should not be necessary. At Chingnar, every three years the Gaita goes round the ghotul seven times, drives slag 'nails' into the threshold and buries a ring before it to keep off witchcraft. At Surma, they tie seven mokha leaves over the door with the same purpose.

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you'. As they dance, the boys beat the ground with their bursundi branches, as a result of which it is believed that stinging wasps and flies will not bother the village for the rest of the year.[1]

Then the chelik go on their stilts outside the village to where a stone stands on an ant-hill in honour either of Bhimul Pen, Dito Pen or Gorondi Muttai. They go in procession round the stone seven times and the Sirdar winds a string round and round it. He sends one of the boys some distance away and he himself presses his hand down on the ground to crack his fingers and says, 'Now we will see if you have really been helping us'. He picks up one of the eggs that they have begged from the village and throws it to where the other boy is standing. If the god is favourable, the egg does not break and the other boy picks it up and throws it back. They do this three times.[2] If the egg breaks the leader picks up the mess and rubs a little of it on the penis of every member of the party in turn saying, 'May we be free of itch and ringworm'.

Then they break their stilts and arrange them over the stone. Sometimes the stilts are tied in a sort of square and the foot-rests and pegs hung from it. Four stilts are placed upright at each corner and a cord is tied round them. They offer eggs and chickens at the foot of this shrine and tie the egg-shells in a string to the top of the stilts. They kill the chickens by hitting their heads on the ground, not by cutting their throats as usual. Then they cook the chickens and any other food that they have been given and eat the feast and drink as much liquor as they have been able to collect. There is a rule that on this day they must not cook on a stone hearth out of respect for the stone representing the deity, but should cut green pegs of saja wood, drive them into the ground and put their pots on these.

There are various stories to account for the origin of this ceremony. In the Kondagaon Tahsil the Muria say that on the festival of Amavas Lingo's brother, Bhimul, went out of his house to give salt to his cattle. His little son wept, crying, 'I want to go too', and as it was very muddy his mother Gorondi made him a pair of stilts and sent him with his father. When the village boys saw Bhimul's son walking on the stilts, they asked their fathers to make them also, but they said, 'No, we don't know how to do it'. So the boys went to Gorondi and persuaded her to make stilts for them. One day a boy fell down; Gorondi ran to him and rubbed the wound with her hands and it healed at once. The boys used to bring their wounds to be cured and their broken stilts for her to mend. At first she refused but afterwards she said, if they brought her eggs and chickens as payment, she would do anything they wanted. So ever since the boys give her presents once a year and she saves them from falling and the stilts from breaking.

Another version of the story attributes the origin of the practice to the notorious jealousy between Bhimul and his wife. There is always supposed to be bitter rivalry between them. In Bhandarsiuni, the Muria once dedicated a bull to Bhimul promising that they would sacrifice it to him if he gave them good rain. This made Gorondi very angry and her Siraha called the villagers and said to them, 'Why have you been so stupid as to give a bull to my husband? Bhimul has gone below to dig roots and he won't be back for six months, so

[1] Russell records a Teli custom at the Pola festival, when women bring branches of a thorny creeper which they call Marbod and sweep their houses saying, 'O Marbod, sweep away all diseases, pains, coughs, bugs, flies and mosquitoes'.—Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 550. Cf. Hivale, op. cit., p. 123.

[2] Divination by egg-throwing, though in a different way, is common among the Khasi.—P. R. T. Gurdon, *The Khasis* (London, 1914), pp. 16 and 226ff. For an interesting account of the folk-lore of eggs, see L. F. Newman, 'Some Notes on the Folklore of Poultry', *Folk-lore*, Vol. LIII (1940), pp. 104ff.

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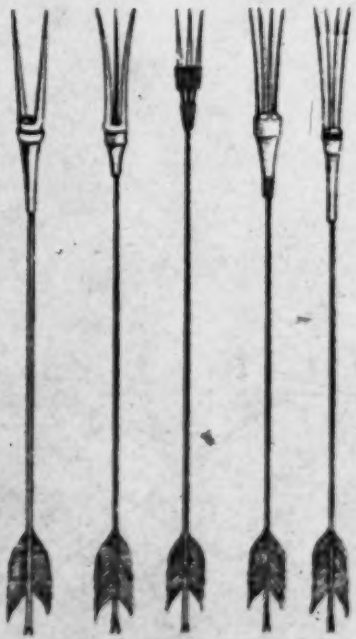
224 The older people are keen hunters and trappers, though much of the game has disappeared. Simple thorn-traps are placed round the mahua trees to catch bats, and more substantial snares are set for birds, hares and larger animals. Before the great Seed Festival at the end of the hot weather, there [796 is a ceremonial hunt at which bows and arrows are worshipped 787] and all the able-bodied men go out to get what game they can, their success or otherwise being regarded as an omen for the coming harvest.

226 262 The Maria fish with nets and traps, by baling out water from pools or by poisoning the streams. Small fish, prawns, crabs and frogs are very popular roasted with spices and taken with the refreshing juice of the toddy or sago palms.

411 The tools and weapons of the Maria naturally figure frequently in their acts of violence. The most common implement of murder is the ordinary *godel* axe which corresponds to the *tangia* in universal use throughout central India. The Maria also use, chiefly for ceremonial purposes, a *pharsi* battle-axe with a crescent blade.



Engram arrows
(Length about 3')

The *banda* or *gagra* is the Maria dao. The *banda* is a large knife with a broad end and rather a short handle used to cut bamboos and young trees. The *gagra* has a much longer handle and sometimes a point and a curved blade. It is not only very useful in the forest; it is a powerful weapon of assault. No spears feature in any of the murders described

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535 but with a great variety of turns and changes: the 'bison'
585 charge and fight each other, pick up rings or leaves on the points of their horns, and chase the girl dancers. The girls, each with a dancing-stick in her right hand, form a long line and go round and through the men dancers with many different movements and steps. They do not usually sing, and indeed the tune would be lost in the thunder of the drums. As they go, they beat the ground with their sticks *dum-dum-dum, di-dum, dum-dum*. Masked mummers, clowns dressed in straw, naked acrobats with enormous imitation genitalia, add to the gaiety of the scene. There is no finer dance in India.

293 The head-dress of bison horns is the chief treasure of a Maria home. It is kept with the utmost care, dismantled, in closed bamboo baskets, and it takes nearly an hour to assemble it. Horns are rare nowadays in Bastar and have to be imported from Jeypore. A Maria may give a bull in exchange for a pair of good horns; they should be white at the bottom turning to black half way up.

A bamboo frame forms the base of the head-dress. The horns are attached to the front and a great tuft of feathers rises behind. Cloth, often old and costly silk, is tied round and round and a tail hangs down behind. Across the front a fringe of cloth adorned with cowries covers the dancer's eyes.

The feathers used are those of the peacock and of domestic
[237] cocks specially castrated for the purpose. It is considered
● [707] unlucky for a feather to fall to the ground during a dance, and before they begin the dancers address the Earth Mother and the Ancestors: 'Save us from the dangers of magic and let none of the feathers fall'.

428 A man's head-dress passes to his son or brother's son after
682 his death. His bow and arrow and his drum are also heir-
762 looms and are highly valued. The loss of a head-dress drove one Maria youth to suicide, and a dispute about possession of an outfit of buttocks-bells led another to murder.

184 In the north of the area, many Maria dance both with bison
535 horns and in Hill Maria fashion. The latter wear the skirt, decorated cap and streamers, and buttocks-bells characteristic of the Abujhmar Hills.

534 The Maria are not very good at musical instruments. They use a small fiddle called kikir, a Jews-harp made of iron or

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indicate their will to the living through the Siraha or Waddai 769
and by appearing to them in dreams, and it is considered 775
highly dangerous to ignore their behests.

The necessity for their propitiation has affected every aspect 769
of Maria life. Offerings are made to them at every festival and at every domestic or village ceremony. They are remembered as a matter of routine in every magic formula along with the Earth Mother, Danteshwari and other deities. A few drops of liquor are offered to them every time a Maria drinks. Fire from the hearth of the Pot of the Departed in the Gaita's house is used to light the first fire in the forest clearings and the sacred fires at festivals. The importance of the Ancestors, who remain as a sort of conservative society to safeguard the traditions of the tribe, will appear throughout this book and need not be elaborated now.

VII

Women dying in pregnancy or child-birth are buried, so are 764
the victims of small-pox and of such other diseases as the 766
Siraha may from time to time direct. All others are cremated, a fact which often makes police investigation difficult and even impossible.

At one time (I am not sure how far the custom survives) 766
the Waddai was buried naked and in an upright posture. The first child of a house, if it dies under five years old, is buried in the same erect posture, with face to the east—as [787] ●
there is light there, and beneath a mahua tree—for it is fertile of flowers and fruit, a good omen for the family.

In a funeral the chief actors are the Hanagunda or Hanal- 764
gaita, who is the master of ceremonies, and the sister's son or son-in-law of the deceased. The Hanagunda has to tie a thread round the corpse and hang the cow's-tail on the menhir. It is his wife's duty to wash the body, and to take cooked rice and haldi to the pyre. The sister's son has to climb on the roof to beat a drum to summon the relatives: he sits on the uraskal while it is being carried to its place; he makes the appointed offerings before the stone: he kills the sacrificial and festal cow.

After death the dead man is laid with his head to the east in the living room of his house. His sister's son takes a stick

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piece of wood in his hand and lifting it over each pile several times from right to left uttered charms calling on the soul of the deceased to be content. The dead man's son brought a chicken and made it eat the rice, going from right to left three times. The Waddai passed his stick quickly over the chicken each time. However, when the fowl was eating the rice, it did not follow the proper order, but started to eat the sixth pile after the fourth. The Waddai declared that this was because two persons were involved in the fatal magic. After this had been done three times, the dead man's son passed the chicken between his legs backwards and twisted its neck till it was severed from the trunk. This he threw behind him, holding the head in his hands. He ripped open the head by cutting it through the beak and threw it into the fire. If this was not done, the head might turn into what is called in Gondi *vispitte* (a kind of bird which is known as *jiv chirai* in Hindi) and if this came to the village and called 'jiv, jiv' the people would die.

They then dug a hole in the earth close to the leaf-cups with a knife and placed a forked saja stick there. The dead man's son stood in front of the stick with his back to it, holding the cow's tail in his hand. He pointed it first at the sun, then to the four corners of the world and lastly to the place where the dead body had been cremated. He did this thrice and then tied the tail to the stick and poured a little landa on it. The dead man's wife offered some mahua liquor in a leaf-cup, because when her husband was alive one day when they were drinking they had agreed to die together. The Waddai, therefore, said as she was giving the liquor, 'Do not also take her away with you; release her from her promise; let her live for a while and look after the other members of the family'. Then the deceased's son and brother-in-law, who had carried the rice and pulse, threw it down near the stick. The dead man's son who had also taken with him a little thatch from the roof of his house now threw this at the stick saying, 'You built the house, now accept this'. Similarly, all the other things of which the old man had been fond when he was alive were thrown there. His son-in-law, however, picked up his bow and arrow and his knife was taken by one of the drummers. The drummers then threw away their drum-sticks into the ashes of the pyre.

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I am not sure that a ring associated with any kind of death is not equally useful.

The Maria magicians believe themselves able to foretell a child's destiny by certain signs at birth. If, at the place where the placenta is buried, there appear the footprints of a tiger or the marks of a snake, they declare that the child will be either killed by a tiger or bitten by a snake. If the water in the pot that is placed above the placenta-pit runs out of its own accord, it means that the child will be drowned. If a baby is born with a strangulating cord, it means that, when it grows up, it will either be hanged or will commit suicide by hanging.

But there is nothing to compare with the superstitions in Europe; the belief, for example, that the heart of a still-born child eaten while yet warm renders the eater invisible, thus aiding him to steal. Adam gives a number of beliefs from the Western world that equal the most bizarre of those recorded in Asia. He describes the soporiferous candles made of the fat of virgin children and used to see whether anyone was still awake in a house about to be burgled. The left thumb of a corpse nine weeks in the grave enables a thief to enter a house at night without rousing the occupants. In Poland the right hand of the corpse of a suicide may be used to discover stolen goods. In Italy, especially in Sicily, it is still believed that treasure can be unearthed with the assistance of the blood of innocent children.[1]

[826] [1] Adam, op. cit., pp. 261 ff. In Mandla District I have met Gond who believe that when a man is hanged a few drops of *jio-tel*, or "life-oil", fall from his body. If this oil can be obtained and applied to a dying man, he will be restored to life. At one time Mr Hivale was believed to possess a few drops of this precious liquid. The 'Hand of Glory' idea has its parallel in India. In Chittagong it was at one time customary for dacoits (mostly Mohammedan) to spread a shroud stolen from a corpse over the roof of a house to prevent the inhabitants from waking. See E. O. Sherborne, *Man*, Feb. 1934.

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837 get offended, and in their anger kill the cattle and other livestock. When an animal dies for this cause, its tongue protrudes and a watery discharge issues from its mouth. In Dhurli the Maria said that the guilty person might go blind, and in Mathadi we were told how an old woman did actually become blind as a result of betraying her husband. If a wife commits adultery when her husband is absent on a hunting expedition, her act will 'defile the earth' and the hunt will be ruined. The arrows will fly crookedly, and the husband himself may trip over a stump. He may be bitten by a snake or hit with an arrow. If the deceived husband is a magician, his vision will be clouded. If the proper ceremonies are not performed, he may be afflicted with a watery swelling that may cause death.

674 If a murder is committed on account of adultery, the
783 families both of the murderer and his victim may suffer from this swelling. To prevent the danger, the elders of each house gather together; they mix milk and water in a leaf-cup of mahua leaves and say, 'These sinned; but let not their sin be on us'. Then a representative of each house drinks a little. The family of the murdered man gives a present (which is called in Halbi *bhul-karcha*) to the family of the murderer. A measure of rice is put under the eaves of the victim's house. In the rice there is placed some thread, a ring and an arrow. The two families feast together on pork and rice, and swear friendship with each other. The arrow remains as witness to their oath. Then the murderer's family
[769] take the *bhul-karcha* home, and offer it to the Departed in their own house.

578 Quarrels are always dangerous, for they disturb tribal
787 solidarity and may earn the vengeance of the Departed. Indeed it is dangerous even to dream of a quarrel; if you do, you should sacrifice to the Earth the next morning. If husband and wife are known to be constantly at odds with one another, a panchayat is held and one or both may be fined.

783 When Oyami Anda of Harmamunda carried off and married a girl for whom another youth was serving as Lamhada, he not only had to pay compensation for the work done by the other boy, but a ceremony was performed to purify both parties of enmity. Anda stood with the Lamhada

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Aranpur I saw a large pile of ashes and half-burnt logs of 764
wood in front of the uraskal stones erected in memory of members of the Barse clan. These were the remains of the pyre for Barse Chewa who had recently been hanged. In this case it was considered of ill omen that, although two attempts were made to burn the pyre, a lot of the wood remained unburnt. In other villages, however, we were told that such ceremonies must not be performed in the neighbourhood of the menhirs.

There seems to be no objection to erecting an uraskal or danyakal stone either for murderers or for their victims. At Palnar an uraskal was mounted for Mulami Bella. At Dugeli an uraskal was erected for a murdered man. In other villages such as Metapal (where there is no uraskal for Banjami Irma who was murdered by his own son) or at Gandarguda (where there is no danyakal for Rawa Hirma) the absence of these memorials is said to be due to the fact that the deceased were poor men and their relatives could not afford them. But at Dugeli, Kunjami Pandu told us that an uraskal for a murdered man can only be erected after the case against the murderer is settled. When his own brother was murdered, he did not at first erect a stone for [767] ●
him, and he was continually troubled by the restless ghost who came in dreams to reproach him for not 'mingling his soul with the dead, and for his failure to give him a stone'. Once Pandu did this, he had no more bad dreams.

The ceremonies of erecting a menhir for a murderer are exactly the same as for anyone else. When the villagers were carrying the stone for Mulami Bella at Palnar, they halted and put it on the ground, and the women of the house threw rings on to it. Afterwards the women eagerly collected these [771]
rings, for it is considered very lucky to wear them.

On the forest road between Palnar and Jabeli there is a row of the flat memorial stones called danyakal, and at one end a tall carved wooden pillar and a large earthen tomb. The tomb, the pillar and one of the stones are in honour of Marvi Oyami Masa who died in jail while serving a sentence for the murder of his uncle. Masa was a very important man in Jabeli. He was rich, he was the Waddai of the village and he was a Siraha medicine-man. His death seemed to be far more important to the villagers than that of the man

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775 of Chichari described how this happened to three of his
783 fellow-prisoners and they all died. Boti of Telam suffered a similar visitation and was ill for a whole year.

768 In several places I found that a house or a village had been
14 moved from its original site after a murder had been committed there. At Aranpur, for example, the house in which Chewa killed his father-in-law was destroyed, and a new house was built elsewhere for the widow and other members of the family. At Doriras the whole village was shifted from its former site in the year following the murder of Kawasi Boti. Muler village also was shifted after the murder of Rawa Harma.

VI

764 The funeral ceremonies of a suicide are performed in the
762 same way with the clothes and ornaments taking the place of the corpse. When Masa's younger wife hanged herself at Samgiri, her body after the post-mortem examination was buried at Dantewara. Her clothes and ornaments were taken out to a cross-roads and cremated according to the customary ritual. Her scythe, rice-husker and winnowing-fan were placed at the spot, but the scythe was picked up and carried home by one of her husband's relatives. Next morning they went to inspect the ashes and found distinct marks of hanging. A chicken was used to divine the cause of death,
[787] and it indicated that the woman had been angry and committed suicide in a fit of temper. The tragedy was in fact due to the girl's complaint that her husband did not pay her enough attention. The chicken's neck was then twisted, the head removed, split into through the beak and thrown away.

762 In Borgum village, the wife of Markami Pide committed
766 suicide because she was in love with another man and did not care for her husband. The body was taken to Dantewara for the post-mortem and buried there. The clothes were taken back to the village and burnt outside together with her mat, winnowing-fan, rice-husker and sickle. The next day the Priest of the Dead put rice and roots round the pyre. He made seven small piles of rice and brought a chicken saying, 'You were angry and put an end to your life; now become cool and rest in peace here and trouble none of us,

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tics both waking and sleeping, but they form a very small proportion of criminals. On the whole, the dream-life of criminals shows that they are insensitive and unemotional, true imbeciles in feeling and partly so in intelligence.[1]

The dreams of Maria prisoners mainly agree with this. The aboriginal theory of dreams is that the *jiwa* or soul leaves the body in sleep and goes out to seek adventure. The dream is what it sees as it goes to and fro about the world. In prison the soul takes every opportunity to leave the confined and frustrated body, and goes home to visit the family or roams abroad in search of variety. Barse Mata said, 'In my sleep I really feel as though the soul was leaving my body. It runs to the house and sees all my people there'. Another man described how his wife came and slept with him in his dream, and how he would go out and see his family and his dead father whom he had murdered. But, he added, his father never reproached him for what he had done. Boti described how he saw dances, bazaars, his relatives and wife and children. Marvi Kuma said that his soul frequently went home to visit his wife. Muchaki Dasru sees his wife and children at night. He sits up and wants to weep. But on another occasion he finds, as he said, that 'the dream is the chutney of sleep' and by its help he has been able, in spite of imprisonment, to see all that is going on in the outside world. Munda sees girls, fighting-cocks, horses (which are bad), snakes (which are good). His soul constantly seeks rice-beer and tobacco. Vetti Rupe said that he saw his family in dreams, and sometimes a witch or a sorcerer. 'Even now our enemies can trouble us from outside the jail'. He said that he found dreams alarming, for in the ordinary way if a Maria has an inauspicious dream, he can make suitable offerings and free himself of the danger. In the jail there is no shrine and no chaplain for this purpose.

Very tender experiences between husband and wife occur in dreams, and one boy described how his young wife came to him in sleep and gave him the food he loved and slept with him. More moving still, reminding one of a famous incident in Browning's *Ring and the Book*, was the experience of a boy who killed his wife in a drunken rage. 'When I

[1] Havelock Ellis, op. cit., pp. 132 f.

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saw her dead, I wept and was very sad. I killed her by mistake. It was not from the heart'. He went on to describe how she still came to sleep with him in dreams. She, his victim, catches him by the hand and says, 'Come. Why do we stay here in this prison?'

But normally it is considered extremely dangerous to see in a dream the ghost of the person you have murdered, or to be visited by the Departed. Pandru of Chichari described how he had a dream in prison in which two people were pressing his shoulders very hard when suddenly a third man came and pushed them aside. These two people represented the Departed, and the man who pushed them away was a friendly ancestor who thus saved him from a serious illness. He said that while he was in jail three of his fellow-prisoners saw in dreams the ghosts of the men they had killed and all three died. Boti of Telam was also visited by the ghost of his victim, and as a result he was ill for a whole year. This suggests a strongly emotional element in dreams about violent crime.

This is a convenient point to refer to the very interesting dream seen by Pandru shortly before the fatal quarrel with his brother which led to murder and imprisonment. In his dream he saw an Anga clan-god and a drum and village trumpet. The clan-god stood for the corpse of the murdered man being taken out for burial and the drum and trumpet suggested that the people were weeping and mourning. In *The Maria and Their Ghotul* I suggest a close connection between the uses of the Anga clan-god and the corpse for purposes of divination. The Anga, which is carried on the shoulders by four men and in many cases resembles a bier, is a suitable harbinger of doom.

A Jailor of thirty years' experience told me that usually the Maria murderers went to their fate bravely and seldom had to be dragged or forced. They were asked to say *Ram Ram Ram* as they went to their death. The executions have a profound effect on other prisoners. Doga of Jabeli was condemned to death and was confined in a solitary cell next door to Marvi Chewa. He told me how terrified he was when Chewa was hanged, since he knew that the same fate was in store for him. All night before his execution, Doga listened to the unhappy man weeping and heard the struggle as he

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● 787 was dragged out of his cell by the warders. The Maria from Pinna Bheji described to me how terrified they were when the nephew of the Zamindar of Bhopalpatnam and his two companions were hanged. The Zamindar's nephew went to his death crying *Ram Ram*, but at the gallows he lost control of himself and covered the Magistrate who was present with the foulest abuse.